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Commanding Officer
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THE ALSOS MISSION

Colonel Boris T. Pash, AUS Ret.

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This book is dedicated to my Wife and to The Men of Alsos.

The views and opinions expressed herein do not purport to reflect those of the Department of Defense, Department of Army, or of any other Government Department or Agency, or of any individual other than the author.

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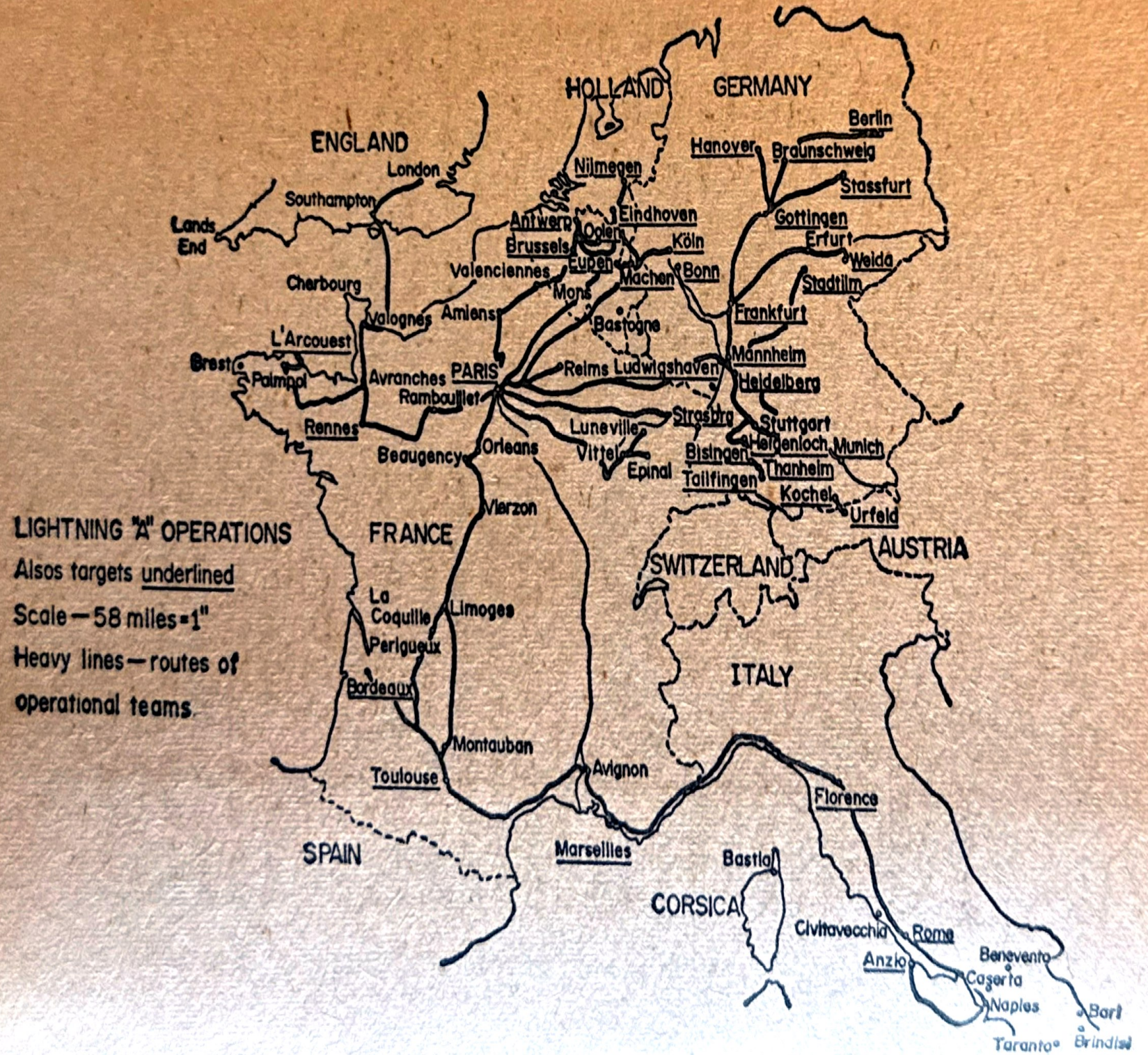
Colonel Boris T. Pash, a native of San Francisco, was a captain in the Military Intelligence Reserve when called to active duty in June, 1940. He headed a counter-operation to break up the first Soviet effort to steal U. S. atomic secrets and, having successfully accomplished this assignment, was called to command The Alsos Mission.

After WWII, the author held successive assignments as Chief of the Foreign Liaison Section on General Douglas MacArthur's Staff in Tokyo (1946-47), on detail from the Army to The Central Intelligence Agency (1948-51), as Special Forces planning officer with the U. S. Forces in Austria (1952-53), as Sixth Army Deputy Asst. Chief of Staff for Intelligence (Security) (1953-56) and on the Staff of the Asst. Secty. of Defense for Guided Missiles (1956-57), retiring from the Army in November 1957 on disability due to war injuries. Col. Pash completed Government service in June 1963, having served as Chief of the Eastern European and USSR Division of the Quartermaster Technical Intelligence Agency and later with The Foreign Science and Technology Center of the Army.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THE ALSOS MISSION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chap.		Page
	Foreword	
I	The Golden Gate	9
II	Hurry Up and Wait	14
III	The Lost Cloak and Dagger	23
IV	Alsos Approved by Pentagon	33
V	Mission to Britanny	40
VI	Total Mission	52
VII	Lightning-A Strikes Paris	60
VIII	Scientists Are Human	71
IX	Lightning-A Strikes in the North	79
X	Our Eagles Deliver	96
XI	Partisan Country	100
XII	Operational Base—*La Meynardie*	105
XIII	The Geiger Counter Ticks	110
XIV	The Red Ball Express Delivers	116
XV	The Lull Between Storms	125
XVI	A Bubble—Not a Bomb	144
XVII	A Breathing Spell?	162
XVIII	The Rhine Is Crossed	169
XIX	*Gaudeamus Igitur*	179
XX	Alsos Strikes Again	187
XXI	Operation Big	200
XXII	Alsos Hits the Jackpot	213
XXIII	Into the Alpine Redoubt	219
XXIV	Alsos to the Rescue	242
	The Men of Alsos	249

CHAPTER I

The Golden Gate

The United States was on the way to an atomic bomb—but what about Hitler?

It was late fall of 1943. Beginning to squirm under the pressure of the Allied might, the Nazi madman was threatening to unleash his super-weapons. Would one of them be the dread atomic explosive? When would he have it ready? Could he beat us to the punch? Where were his atomic centers?

The American and British governments wanted an intelligence report rather than a deadly atomic blast to furnish the answers to those vital questions. Franklin D. Roosevelt ordered information secured at any cost. Winston Churchill pressed for action. But the highly touted cloak-and-dagger boys of our Office of Strategic Services (OSS), like the renowned British Intelligence, could get nowhere.

Washington decided to give the job to the Army. The Pentagon, in turn, tapped Maj. Gen. Leslie R. Groves, head of the United States atomic project. He discussed the frightening situation with Dr. Vannevar Bush, director of the Office of Scientific Research and Development (OSRD) and Maj. Gen. George V. Strong, chief of Army Intelligence. The latter recommended to Gen. George C. Marshall, Army Chief of Staff, that a special military-scientific unit be formed.

At the time I had just completed a successful investigation of the first Soviet effort—aided by American communists—to steal our atomic secrets. I was called to Washington, where General Groves and General Strong informed me of a new assignment. I was to command the special unit. After selecting several military personnel, I returned to San Francisco to await further orders.

On 19 November, 1943, from my office in the Presidio, I watched with heavy thoughts the setting sun spray the hills

around San Francisco Bay with golden rays. The majestic bridge spanned a truly Golden Gate. The prospect of an atomic holocaust blotting out the scene filled me with dread but also with resolve. Would my new mission be successful? I would have to make it so.

Lt. Col. George R. Eckman, my executive officer, was with me. It was time that he be briefed.

"George, I've been handed command of a special unit. We're to find out if the Nazis are ahead of our Los Alamos boys."

In civilian life, George Eckman had been an experienced newspaper man. We had served together since the early summer of 1940, when both of us had been called to duty. He had handled several important counter-intelligence cases on the Coast. I greatly valued his deliberate and clear thinking.

Because of my prior operations in support of the security of Manhattan Project—code name for the U. S. atomic effort—I had known for some time that our government was developing a super-bomb. If successful, it could change the entire complexion of the war. As a matter of fact, General Groves had told me that the weapon were possessed by even a tiny country, such as Uruguay, ". . . it could dictate its terms to the rest of the world."

No wonder the Soviet was trying to steal our secret!

I went over that background with George Eckman, then gave him the picture as it had been sketched for me in Washington. Rommel's steel legions had been driven out of Africa. The Allies had a foothold in Italy. The Nazis, though still stubbornly holding, were being forced by irresistible pressure to give up some of their real estate. In the East our co-belligerent, with a massive assist from the U. S., was slowly but steadily pushing back the invader. Hence those questions that plagued the Allied governments. Hitler was bragging about his secret arsenal of super-weapons. Was not this the time for him to unlock it? Above all, what—if anything—did he have?

Reports were coming in of huge concrete installations and underground constructions designed, it was presumed, for powerful rockets. American and British scientists were feverishly studying intelligence gleanings from British, Norwegian and American sources. But in all this, there was only negligible information about the Nazi atomic effort.

Certainly our own project had progressed far by the fall of 1943. Yet German scientists had been among the pioneers

in nuclear fission, had had a head start on us. It seemed likely that they were as advanced in the development of a bomb as we were, if not ahead of us.

I passed on to George Eckman more of what I had learned in Washington. Army Intelligence considered it possible that the Nazis might be making use of top Italian scientists—or that Italian scientists, through the scientific grapevine, might at least have some knowledge of German developments. Now that Italy was being invaded, the Allies possibly could get hold of some leading Italian nuclear scientists, their documents and laboratories. Answers to the questions disturbing America and the Allies might be obtained. But how to reach those scientists?

Allied troops were on the Italian mainland and in control of the southern half of the "boot." Naples, on the west coast and Bari on the east coast were the centers of American and British military activities. Allied artillery was pounding Monte Cassino and a breakthrough in the direction of Rome seemed imminent. Several outstanding Italian scientists were reportedly in Rome, including Professors Amaldi, Giordanni and Weck. All this had contributed to the decision to set up the special task force. Its immediate mission would be to enter Rome with the attacking troops and pick up the Italian scientists and their documents. Our own scientists attached to the task force would then conduct an investigation. This was the force I was to command.

It had to have a code name, of course. The one dreamed up by someone in General Groves' office was The Alsos Mission, *alsos* being the Greek word for a grove (of trees)—admittedly not too clever a selection. But we were stuck with it. In the field, we were soon referring to our unit simply as Alsos.

I had had experience with General Groves while working on the Soviet espionage case. We had always come to a speedy meeting of minds—and there had never been a question as to whose mind was met! The General knew how to get results. He never tolerated the staff gobbledegook and beating around the bush of which there was so much in Washington. He was exactly the kind of man to be depended upon in a national emergency.

Naturally I was proud and pleased to have been chosen by the War Department to command the task force. It was to

undertake an operation for which there was no precedent in military history.

"You'll have to play it by ear," was the most definitive advice given me, usually followed by—"only don't run afoul of the field commanders."

Now that the job was mine, George Eckman demanded, how was it to be handled? I had no ready response. For days I had been asking myself that very question. Of course, a general concept had been outlined on 25 September in a memorandum from General Strong to General Marshall:

> The scope of inquiry should cover all principal scientific military developments, and the investigations should be conducted in a manner to gain knowledge of enemy progress *without disclosing our interest in any particular field*. [Italics mine.]

At a later date, when the unit was in Algiers ready for the hop to Italy, I emphasized the italicized thought while briefing our four scientists. One of the three not involved in our primary objective asked, "Colonel, this means we are only decoys?" "Exactly," I responded.

The memorandum had recommended further that the unit consist of a commanding officer, not more than six scientists, six Counter-Intelligence Corps (CIC) agents, and six interpreters.

Persons or installations of interest to Allied Intelligence were our targets. A small military operational team was to enter an area behind the combat troops wherever such a target was indicated and seize it. The closer the operational team followed the attacking troops, the better chance there would be for success. Retreating enemy forces could be expected to carry away or destroy any persons and equipment of known possible value to the Allies. But our own advancing troops could be equally dangerous. Attacking soldiers frequently occupy large buildings and former enemy headquarters, or fight bitterly for them. Much damage could result from the fighting. An additional menace would be the souvenir hunter who rummages through desks, scatters documents and materials. Therefore it would be necessary to maintain close liaison with field commanders. Once a target area was considered safe from enemy action, scientists were to enter,

interrogate detained persons, and investigate the installation.

Hence I was to lead into the combat zone a unit composed of two groups with divergent backgrounds and interests—military personnel and scientists. When one considers the general impression of scientists as idiosyncratic "longhairs," it is not surprising that the problem of personalities was of concern to me. I could picture myself having to lead them by the hand to keep them from blundering into trouble. Furthermore, not only would it be necessary to assure their safety in a combat zone but their comfort as well.

CHAPTER II

Hurry Up and Wait

Thanksgiving was seven days off. The prospect of having me at home was pleasing to my wife. The year before I had been bucking head-on gales among the rugged peaks of Alaska while she had presided over the Thanksgiving table.

"Let's have some friends over for dinner," was her suggestion. On instructions from Washington, I had not told her of my overseas assignment.

I expected no trouble about that. Lydia was working in the San Francisco branch of the Office of Censorship, where she was in charge of the diplomatic and privileged mail section. At no time had she ever asked me about my military duties, even in the face of unusual absences and activities. Thus in July of 1943, she had never batted an eye because I had grown a moustache. She had suspected that the addition, which she detested, must have had a good military reason.

"A wife should not expect her husband in the service to tell her his secrets," she had said on several occasions. "You should read what some officials write about in their letters. It's dangerous!"

One can imagine Lydia's chagrin when shortly after the war a neighbor told her that he had heard of my activities in behalf of the atomic bomb project from a casual friend, an officer, at a cocktail party in San Francisco.

On Saturday morning, 20 November, a call from General Strong's office in Washington informed me that Captain Stanard and myself were wanted in Washington. Boyce Stanard of our Seattle office, had been selected as executive officer for the new unit. Because he was mentioned, I was sure that we were actually being ordered overseas. The classified nature of the mission precluded any discussion over the phone. But after a teletype was received in the afternoon, I broke the

news to Lydia. She took it well when she learned I would have to be on my way. It had happened so many times before, she was not surprised. It disturbed me to leave her, but more disturbing was the fact that she could not be told of my destination.

After Stanard and I arrived in Washington, we found there was not much that could be done immediately. Again the exasperating principle of "hurry up and wait" so characteristic of Washington had prevailed. A little thought could have avoided destroying my Thanksgiving holiday.

In a few days we learned that our group of scientists was shaping up. General Groves, in coordination with Dr. Vannevar Bush and Dr. Allen Waterman, selected four outstanding men, each considered an authority in his field. Dr. James Fisk of the Bell Telephone Company, one of America's top physicists, was to head the scientific group. It was also to include Dr. John Johnson of Cornell University; Commander Bruce Olds, an MIT man, then on duty with the Office of Naval Research and Development; and Maj. William Allis, an MIT professor on duty with the War Department scientific staff. Dr. Fisk and I were the only ones fully briefed on the atomic bomb assignment, with specific orders not to disclose this information to anyone other than General Eisenhower or Gen. W. Bedell Smith, his Chief of Staff.

General Strong took me to the office of Henry Stimson, Secretary of War, where I was handed for delivery to General Eisenhower a letter stating that my mission was of extreme urgency and overriding priority. General Strong also armed me with a letter to General Smith. It contained a request that any needed personnel, equipment and funds be made available and that direct communication with Washington be arranged for me.

A drastic departure from normal procedure, the letters were a further indication of the importance Washington attached to the operation.

The trip across the Atlantic from Natal to Dakar was uneventful. Nor did we expect that the next leg, from Dakar to Marrakech, Morocco, would be otherwise. But on the latter flight the plane carried supplies for a small emergency airfield at Atar, in the Sahara Desert, actually in the middle of nowhere. As the plane picked up speed for the take-off at Atar, one of the tires blew out. Only the skillful handling of the controls by the pilot averted an accident. The mishap

forced us to spend the night at Atar, awaiting a replacement for the damaged wheel. So we got acquainted with this isolated desert community, where a U. S. detachment of one officer and seventeen men manned the emergency field.

The base was located near a small desert village. Nearby was an imposing but abandoned desert fortress which, we were told, had been used for the filming of *Beau Geste*. The village was as dirty as its grime-encrusted population. At an open-air "store" one received the impression that a swarm of bees had taken over the space above the counter; closer inspection showed this to be a buzzing cloud of flies that completely covered any piece of meat displayed for sale.

While preparing to turn in for the night I missed my flashlight. My first reaction was that the servant had taken it. But the latter informed me it had been borrowed by young passengers on our flight in order to watch a show. I was kept in the dark both literally and figuratively. Looking around, I discovered that in the next hut the dark silhouettes of these passengers and base personnel could be seen with their backs to the entrance, sitting Arab style on the floor. Many were holding flashlights directed at a "stage" in a corner.

There two rather attractive young Arab girls, unhindered by veils or any other clothing, were doing belly dances. They danced to the music of a phonograph, but performed as well, if not better, than belly dancers I had watched performing under multicolored lights and to the tune of night-club orchestras. Their suggestive yet graceful movements had every man leaning forward, completely captivated by the writhing beauties of the desert. In order not to reduce the number of "footlights," I waited for the show to end. It was not difficult to develop a cooperative attitude.

Weather delayed us in Marrakech for three days. During that time I had a chance to become better acquainted with two of my traveling companions, Colonels "Sad" Sam Daniels and Sam Claybough. Both were to be of much help during our operations in Europe.

When finally we reached Algiers, I reported to GHQ (General Headquarters). I was immediately ushered into Gen. W. Bedell Smith's office. That was my first experience with the top echelon of our field command, and it proved illustrative of most contacts to come. With few exceptions, I found top commanders always ready to cooperate and assist.

"We were expecting you, Pash," General Smith said as I

handed him the two letters from Washington. Having glanced at the letter addressed to him, he left the room carrying the one for General Eisenhower.

Returning shortly, General Smith told me: "The General is pleased to know you're here. He will do everything to help you. You will deal directly with me."

He explained that in Italy I was to report to Gen. A. K. Joyce, Chief of the Allied Control Commission. "You will also check in with the field commanders in order that detailed arrangements can be made for you to operate in their areas. You need not go into your mission with them. They have directives to provide you with all assistance."

He added that Colonel Roderick, the Deputy G-2, was to be my contact at GHQ, since I was to deal only with U. S. personnel. The G-2 was a British officer, Maj. Gen. Kenneth Strong. In view of my specific instructions from Washington, it would be best to avoid his questions.

Once in Italy, I called at the Allied Control Commission in Brindisi and later contacted the Allied Navy Command. It was through the assistance of General Joyce that on 23 December I was able to visit Marshal Badoglio, head of the Italian Provisional Government. The Marshal armed me with a letter addressed to all Italian civilian and military authorities.

One of our most helpful contacts was with Captain (later Commodore) H. W. Zirolli, the senior U. S. Naval officer in Italy. I have always suspected that Admiral Bowman, then Chief of Navy Research and Development in Washington and Commander Olds' boss, had sent him word of our arrival in the theater. Captain Zirolli's answer to my thanks evoked the half-serious reply: "Bruce Olds is the only Navy man in your group. He'll need a lot of help. You don't think I'm going to let a Navy man down, do you?"

On 25 December, Captain Stanard was anxiously awaiting the return of the group from Brindisi. He had remained in Naples to establish the first Alsos base on the continent. He had obtained the directors' suite of the Bank of Naples as our headquarters. Now he wanted to be sure that we did not miss the Christmas party of the Naples-based CIC detachment.

In reporting his accomplishments, he added that Ralph Cerame, CIC agent from Rochester, New York, assigned to Alsos by the CIC headquarters in Algiers, had arrived for duty. Ralph was a fluent Italian linguist and an exceptionally capable operative.

NR. 1458 DI PROT.

IL CAPO DEL GOVERNO

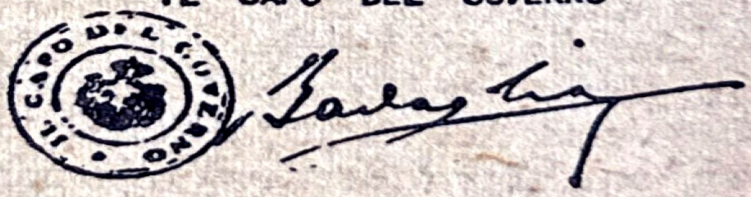
23 DICEMBRE 1943

A TUTTE LE AUTORITA' CIVILI E MILITARI

IL TEN. COL. B.T. PASH DELL'ESERCITO AMERICANO É CAPO DI UNA MISSIONE SPECIALE AMERICANA INCARICATA DI RACCOGLIERE INFORMAZIONI DI CARATTERE MILITARE RELATIVE AL PROGRESSO RAGGIUNTO DAL NEMICO NEL CAMPO DELLO SVILUPPO SCIENTIFICO.

TUTTE LE AUTORITÀ ITALIANE VORRANNO DARE LA MASSIMA COLLABORAZIONE A DETTO UFFICIALE ED AI MEMBRI DELLA MISSIONE STESSA.-

IL CAPO DEL GOVERNO



The party took place in the two large, gaily decorated social rooms of the CIC headquarters building. The hosts and many guests, including Margaret Bourke-White of *Life* Magazine, were in high spirits. A record player furnished music for dancing. Major Pappert, the detachment commander, told me he was assigning to Alsos one of his best combat-tested agents, Carl Fiebig of Sebewing, Michigan. Carl proved a pleasant, steady boy, cool and efficient under fire, and an excellent German linguist. After I had explained something of the operational side of our mission, Carl said, "Colonel, my

buddy, Gerry Beatson, from Rockford, Illinois, is a fighting fool of a CIC agent. I know he'd like to join us."

It seems Gerry "happened" also to be at the party, having come up from Sorento where he was stationed. I suspected that Carl had arranged for Gerry to be around in the hope that he would be able to meet me. Gerry looked like a kid. But he showed more assurance and poise than most agents. He was decisive, quick, and wore an expressive grin. I decided to take him on. His concern was whether he would fit in. He had neither language background nor technical training.

"Colonel, all my experience has been with the 'doggies' in the combat zone," he said. "What could I do in your outfit?"

"Well, Gerry, we expect to operate right up with the infantry and will need men with your experience. You could be my trigger man."

The fourth agent to join us was Perry Bailey, a tall, blond, pleasant-looking chap whose easy manner and soft disposition belied his efficiency and capabilities. He was typical of our agents. He had no special background for this kind of work, but he was an alert, resourceful and energetic American boy—a fine product of our education and our way of life.

These four lads were to play important roles in the operation of Alsos, sharing with me anxious and dangerous days. Each was to contribute vitally to the success of our mission.

During the preliminary phase Ralph Cerame located scientists for our group to contact and, as a technical translator, assisted in discussions with them. While maintaining surveillance on certain scientists—especially Dr. Bakunina, a Russian-born faculty member of the University of Naples—he had more than his share of home-made Italian spaghetti. However, our activities were not confined to the rear areas. Some reports were received from forward combat elements indicating possible new developments in enemy armament. Each time, one of our scientists would be conducted to the reporting unit to investigate. On one such occasion Dr. Johnson was heading for the 36th Field Artillery Brigade CP (command post). The road led in front of our 105mm emplacements. Suddenly the guns opened up against Monte Cassino, sending the heavy shells whizzing over the heads of those in the jeep.

"One can't help wanting to duck," remarked Dr. Johnson after the second salvo.

During such trips we became accustomed to certain signs

strung along the roadside. With these our commanders were trying to wage war against a common enemy of any army.

No doubt the Burma Shave principle of advertising contributed to the poetic ingenuity of the headquarters bards. Typical pronouncements nailed to roadside trees read:

A girl awaits
With love and hope
Use your head
Don't be a dope
Take a pro

Letters from home
Build morale
Don't let it be spoiled
By a dirty gal
Take a pro

A short one was positively to the point:

Girls who take boarders
Bring social disorders
Take a pro

Even more blunt was:

A happy guy
A fool was he
Forgot his pro
Now has VD
Take a pro

Our trips to Fifth Army headquarters were discouraging as far as our mission was concerned. The campaign was in a static period and there was no hope of reaching Rome soon. Dr. Fisk and I concluded we had best try to bring one of our top targets out of Rome. This meant enlisting the OSS. According to that organization's own reports, its agents were doing wonders behind enemy lines. It was decided to ask them to get a certain Dr. Amaldi.

Colonel Howard introduced me to the chief of the OSS unit operating with the Fifth Army. At a small but comforta-

ble villa, Santa Maria la Fossa, just west of Caserta, I met with the OSS leaders to discuss our requirements.

The three men brought in on the discussion had the unmistakable mannerisms of American undercover operatives who want to be recognized as such. In the conversation they made it clear that everything should be left to them.

However, there was one small hitch. The OSS was having difficulty in getting support from the Navy.

"To pull off Shark, as we'll call this operation," I was told, "we'll have to have a submarine available at Bari."

They knew I carried powerful credentials and could secure the necessary support.

I asked to go with the pick-up team on the submarine. The reply was, "Colonel, we just cannot let outsiders in on our operations. It's policy and no exceptions can be made."

On 4 January, my request for a sub was initiated through Colonel Howard. Some time earlier, he had asked Navy Command for a sub to be used in certain Fifth Army covert operations. So far he had received no answer. So he held out little hope to me. Nevertheless, he prepared a letter to the Senior Allied Naval Officer, Rear Admiral McGregor (British), whose headquarters was in Taranto.

"Pash, you'd better carry this letter personally through all the command echelons from whom you'll have to get concurrence. Then deliver it yourself to Admiral McGregor. That way, you might get some action."

That meant five signatures to be picked up over the length and breadth of Southern Italy!

Colonel Howard took me to Maj. Gen. Alfred Gruenther, Fifth Army Chief of Staff. He had been briefed previously and was familiar with the general nature of our mission. He signed the request immediately.

Lt. Armand Paolino and I then left Naples on the morning of 5 January in one of the worst winter storms of 1944. Crossing the Beneventure Mountains was the most horrifying travel experience I encountered in the whole war. We finally ended up in Taranto, after successfully obtaining all the needed concurrences from the Eighth British Army, Army Group, Allied Commission and the U. S. Naval Command. Commodore Zirroli, whose concurrence was among those needed, was instrumental in getting Admiral McGregor's approval. Upon my return, Colonel Howard was surprised as well as pleased to have my report. It happened that on that

same morning he had received a dispatch from the 15th Army Group (British), informing him that his request for a sub had been disapproved.

As far as the OSS was concerned, they told me Shark presented no serious problems. "We'll just drop in one of our agents with a radio. He'll make contact, and if this doctor is willing to come, we'll pick him up off one of the beaches on the Adriatic side. That's routine for us."

I waited.

January, 1944, was a bad month in the Naples area. The weather was chill and damp. The war seemed stalled. Our scientists were kept reasonably busy interviewing Italian scientists and captured technical specialists of the Italian armed forces. But those early contacts indicated that no startling results could be expected even though some valuable scientific intelligence was being picked up. It was clear that while the Italians had been doing quite a bit of military research, they had lacked the organization needed to achieve impressive breakthroughs.

Our four scientists met with the Italian Minister of Communications, with Lt. Gen. Matteini, Naval Ordnance Chief, and with the staff of the Italian Naval Academy. During January, individual contacts were made with professors at the University of Naples and with selected officers of the Italian Air Force and Navy who, because of their technical knowledge and research activity, were in a position to be of use. We were particularly interested in an Air Force major, Mario Gaspari, who had served as Air Attaché in Berlin for several years, and a Capt. Franco Fioria, an aviation ordnance specialist, who had been trained by the Nazi Air Force. A worthwhile guest at our apartment was Professor Calosi, an infra-red and torpedo specialist who was latched onto by Dr. Fisk and Bruce Olds because of his visits to Germany.

But essentially, thanks to the tactical situation, we had once again "hurried to wait"—this time hurrying to Italy to wait for the fall of Rome!

CHAPTER III

The Lost Cloak and Dagger

In a couple of weeks our mission ground to a frustrated halt. All leads in Naples and liberated Italy had been explored. Our scientists were on the point of returning to Washington to await developments.

Then word came from the OSS to the effect that an agent had successfully dropped into Rome. We soon should have Dr. Amaldi.

Better still, at ten A.M. on 21 January, Colonel Howard confidentially informed me that a large-scale landing was to be made the next day. If successful, this might advance the timetable for occupying Rome. The colonel suggested that we attach men to the S-Force, a special unit formed to go into Rome with the forward combat elements. Its purpose was to spearhead the various intelligence groups which, like Alsos, wanted to reach targets in Rome.

The advance information given me by Colonel Howard kept me on pins and needles the rest of the day and throughout the night. There was no way to tip off my personnel without violating security. Yet they had to be prepared for action. Handling the military arm proved not too difficult. Stanard was instructed to ready our operational unit to sustain itself, then take it on a three-day field exercise.

"You can move out tomorrow at noon," I told him. "This is a full combat exercise."

That left the problem of the scientists still to be resolved. They were scheduled to leave in three days. Dr. Johnson would have to go in any case, and we had planned to get along without him in our Rome operation. But Dr. Fisk and Major Allis would certainly be needed.

I discussed the general picture with Bruce Olds, who could appreciate the interests of both groups—scientific and

military. Having assured myself of his cooperation if any drastic change occurred, I turned in at two A.M. on 22 January only to be shaken out of my bed at six. Stanard was standing over me with news of the Anzio landing.

"Do we go through with the—ah—exercise, Colonel?"

"I suppose you can still call it that. But change destination. Tomorrow our military unit will join the S-Force outside Maddaloni. That's close to Caserta. Tell our scientists to remain here, ready to join us early next week."

The S-Force was organized along the same lines as *Alsos*. Commanded by Col. George Smith, it was composed of two elements. The first was a Royal Air Force (British) Reconnaissance Squadron (Recces)—a battalion-size ground unit with light armored vehicles. It furnished the operational support, which included guarding targets, protecting the specialists and providing limited emergency combat capability. This unit remained in its own bivouac. The second element was composed of specialists—technicians and investigators.

Targets to be seized were generally chosen because of research and technical developments or other intelligence implications. Because all the Allied nations had an interest in this activity, the S-Force included specialists in intelligence, technical, political, economic and other fields, representing the American, British, French and Italian governments.

Life in the S base—a half-destroyed, damp and uninviting former military post—was not pleasant. There was some serious criticism from the scientists, who objected to the "field conditions" imposed on them. Added to the other drawbacks was the poor food. The necessity to draw on technical personnel to do K.P chores in a unit where there were more chiefs than Indians made each meal trying on strained nerves.

Saturday, 29 January, saddened all of us still further. That day it became evident that our top field command had missed its chance to exploit the shock dealt the Nazis by our initial Anzio success. The Fifth Army was held up. Only with the greatest difficulty was it hanging on to acreage at Nettuno and Anzio. Obviously some time would pass before the S-Force could see any action.

Dr. Fisk decided to return to Washington. He left Naples on 31 January, accompanied by Lieutenant Paolino. On 1 February, the various elements of the S-Force returned to

their parent organizations on a stand-by status. This confirmation that there was no hope for an early entry into Rome made Operation Shark once again important to us.

On 2 February, Major Allis received word that an unexploded radio-controlled glider bomb, of a type the Nazis were using against Allied shipping, had been found within the Allied perimeter at the Anzio beachhead. It was one of these bombs that a few weeks earlier had sunk a U.S. transport with heavy loss of life among Air Corps technicians. This particular missile had been shifted to high priority on our list, so it was understandable that the easygoing professional attitude of Major Allis gave way to that of the aggressive military-technical investigator. He was determined to investigate on the spot. He was not swayed by my argument that the Anzio beachhead was under the complete domination of enemy guns. Only the most compelling reasons could justify taking a scientist to the beachhead. If anything went wrong, I would catch hell. Nevertheless, I directed Captain Stanard to prepare for an Anzio operation. In the meantime, another difficult situation was developing.

On 5 February I visited OSS headquarters. Our cloak-and-dagger boys were having difficulties. At least, that was the information given me.

The OSS agent dropped into Rome had reported by clandestine radio that he had made contact with Dr. Amaldi. The latter was ready to come out and the submarine was available to pick him up on the Adriatic. But it had been decided that the trip from Rome to the east coast, which had to be made secretly, would be too dangerous—it was difficult to develop a good cover story. Such a trip not only could blow the operation but might endanger Amaldi's life. OSS had therefore worked out another plan. Its agents would pick him up on a secluded beach above Civitavecchia, north of Rome. The submarine was not suitable for this operation because "our boys will have to make a fast hit-and-run action." The OSS operations officer requested that arrangements be made to have two PT boats assigned to the OSS base at Bastia, Corsica. The officer in command should report to Lieutenant Hollingshead, U.S.N., assigned to OSS sea-borne operations.

I accepted the report in good faith but the request for PT boats was a surprise. Because of the long Italian coastline, one would assume that the Navy would have provided the OSS with any necessary seagoing capability. But I was to

learn when I contacted Naval Command that the OSS had used Naval craft to take visiting Washington brass on "operational tours" to the Italian coast—visiting VIP's frequently liked "to get the feel of being under fire." I was told that on one such joy-ride they drew within range of German coastal guns. A couple of PT boats were shot up and some crew members were hit. Our Navy was furious and quit lending boats to the OSS. The only way my problem could be resolved was from the top down. This meant a trip to Algiers. In turn, that would affect our proposed Anzio operation scheduled for Tuesday, 8 February. Still, I could not wait. The only Algiers-bound space available was on a plane carrying General Larkin which was to take off Tuesday.

On Sunday, 6 February, Major Allis and I contacted two British officers, Commander Henderson and Lt. Commander Plunkett, the latter a bomb-disposal specialist, and arranged a combined Anzio effort. In addition to the four of us, I was to take Gerry Beatson and Lieutenant Brownell, attached to us from Naval Intelligence. The move was rescheduled for the night of 9 February.

My trip to Algiers was successful. Cooperation from Admiral Lewis, Commander, Naval Forces, Northwest Africa Waters (COMNAVNAW) was assured. The Admiral directed his intelligence officer, Captain Backman, to work out details with the Naval Command in Naples. I also had an opportunity to meet and give a report to Lt. Gen. Jacob L. Devers, the Deputy Commander-in-Chief. This was my first meeting with one of our greatest World War II commanders. More than any other commander, he was to give his personal and direct support to Alsos operations throughout the war.

The third key senior officer I met on this trip was the British Major General, Kenneth Strong, whom I had avoided when first reporting to Algiers. As General Eisenhower's G-2, he was entitled to be fully informed of all intelligence activities. Yet my instructions were to give him no information about my mission. At his request, transmitted to me by his affable aide, Capt. Kenneth Keith, I spent twenty minutes with those officers, having a cup of tea and evading the Gen-erl's queries relating to my activity and at times even misinforming him. No one had ever told me that General Strong had been briefed on my activities and that Washington was aware of that.

Luckily for me, space was found on a C-47 which would

drop me at Naples a few hours before our scheduled departure for Anzio. There was just enough time for me to confer with the OSS chief. "Plan on the PT boats," I told him.

The night of 9 February remains vivid in my memory. The LST was boarded in Naples harbor. Gerry arranged to have our two vehicles backed on last.

"If the Nazis open up on us when we hit the beach, Chief," he told me, "we'll be the first to get off."

Lieutenant Chase, the LST skipper, was a Tennessee banker in civilian life. He gave a British Brigadier, Scott-Elliot of the Black Cat Division, and me the use of his cabin. The constant roll of the vessel made me disgustingly sick. When Ensign Tanner, the Exec, walked in at about four A.M., I was delighted. I figured he had come to wake us for the landing. "Would you gentlemen like some coffee?"

"When do we land?" was my feeble response.

"We haven't left the outer harbor yet. The sea is too rough. We're at anchor."

The delay forced us to make the run in daylight. We passed in full view of Taracino, from which our convoys were often shelled. Luckily the Krauts did not waste ammo.

Late in the evening, as the LST approached Nettuno, adjacent to Anzio, we were treated to dazzling Fourth of July fireworks. Four times Nazi planes dived on us and were beaten off by the ship's anti-aircraft guns. Colorful tracers streaked the darkening sky and a huge orange flare from a direct hit on a plane was an encouraging sight to see. As the LST beached and the ramp dropped, we were off and running. We did not stop our vehicles until clear of open beach. At the disembarkation point we were told to find shelter for ourselves, having been warned that the entire area was within range of the German guns and that we could expect them to open up some time during the night. While looking for a place to bed down, we ran into a couple of chaps on foot trying to find the Command Post. They told us they were reporters and they looked it—no combat equipment or bedrolls. I remember that one of them was Traynor of the *Los Angeles Times*. At my suggestion, they spent the night with us in an abandoned one-story stone house.

The next morning one of our guests accompanied us to the II Corps CP. At one end of the square in Nettuno we

entered a doorway with three successive levels of burlap cloth hung over it to keep any light from showing at night.

Descending a steep stairway chiseled out of sandstone, at a depth of possibly fifty feet we entered a maze of corridors. In pre-war days, local wine-makers had stored their vintages here. Instead of wine casks, field tables now filled the place. Occupying the chairs were stout, thin, tall and short officers.

On 11 February, Major Allis and Commander Plunkett were led to the glider-bomb. It had been roped off in the small crater formed by its impact. Here was full justification for the trip, giving American specialists their first whack at that dreaded weapon. As they worked, Nazi guns furiously pounded the beachhead. Nazi planes made three raids. One was a low-level attack; we were caught on the road and barely had time to seek cover. There was little selection in that regard. Major Allis was obliged to settle for a stack of gasoline drums.

We left Anzio with photographs of the bomb, measurements and full information. Above all, I took with me admiration for the devoted Army medics and nurses who stood firm in their field hospital tents although the enemy could rain down devastation and death whenever he pleased.

Back in Naples, I got together with the OSS to discuss Operation Shark.

"We don't want our agent to remain in Rome any longer than necessary," I was told. "And it's dangerous to keep Amaldi on the string without taking action. So when can we get the PT boats?"

As I have indicated, my request for the boats had come at a time when the mere mention of OSS caused Navy officers in Naples to see red. They wanted nothing to do with that "Cook's Tour gang." But because of my instructions from Algiers and the assistance of Commodore Zirolli, who guided me through the maze of Navy channels in Italy, the boats were soon promised.

Sunday, 20 February, 3 A.M., the boats sallied forth to complete Operation Shark. Our group spent the morning tensely waiting for word that "the shark was netted." As the hours wore on, we got more and more impatient. Finally I called OSS headquarters and was told that an officer was on his way to see me. About noon, he delivered his message. We learned that the operation had not come off.

The second attempt also was unsuccessful. According to

the OSS report, unusual German patrol activity was noticed as the PT boats approached the beaches. It was assumed that the Nazis suspected something and were on the alert. So the OSS decided to postpone contact.

I have often wondered just what the true story was and what use the OSS made of the PT boats. I remember that quite some time after the war, a former OSS man who had been stationed in Bari swapped tales with me. It seems his station had obtained a submarine through the Army which the OSS used to run some relatively safe and simple missions—he called them picnics—in the area. He made a joke of the fact that they sure "put it over on the Army in getting that fish."

Toward the end of February it became more evident than ever that the allies would not crack the German lines very soon. It would not be worthwhile for our group to sit and wait. If Amaldi should be brought out, we could always fly someone to Naples. The entire group returned to Washington. CIC personnel were sent back to unit-control on the understanding that the same men would be available when Alsos once more became active. Ralph Cerame and Perry Bailey were to continue as our direct contacts in Italy.

Certainly the first Alsos venture had not yielded startling results in the field of enemy atomic activity. But sound intelligence is seldom served up on a platter. It must be developed bit by bit. In other scientific fields, the results had been more positive. As I pointed out in my report to the War Department, the on-the-spot analysis of the glider-bomb at Anzio had been a solid gain for our side. In addition, I was able to cite definite intelligence gleanings by our scientists. Though limited mainly to the Naples area, where they had been able to contact only about twenty Italian technical experts, Doctors Allis, Fisk, Johnson and Olds had submitted substantial reports in the field of rockets. They had also explored fruitfully the fields of guided missiles, explosives, chemical warfare and radar. The possibility of cross-channel rockets, and of panels of compressed high explosives in the form of imitation personal items carried by sabotage agents, were two of the dramatic features included in the report. I was able to recommend that Alsos be continued on a permanent basis.

This was authorized in April, 1944. But the story of Alsos

in Italy would not be complete without a postscript concerning—you guessed it—Dr. Amaldi.

I was in London on 3 June, organizing our activities, when a top-secret radio message arrived announcing the imminent fall of Rome. I was directed to proceed to Italy immediately. I caught a plane the following day. Thanks to my radiogram, Perry Bailey was waiting for me in Naples with a jeep.

The inhabitants in the communities through which we passed seemed completely debilitated by the tensions of the last few days of Nazi and Fascist rule.

As we approached Rome, the enthusiasm of the people became more noisy and overt. The Romans had not suffered as had the poor villagers.

We entered Rome proper about eight A.M. on the morning of 5 June, right after the forward combat elements. The northern half of the city was still held by the Germans. In the just-liberated half, the populace was celebrating wildly.

We reached the S-Force rendezvous at about ten, to find its setting like that of a Boy Scout troop on an outing. Tents had been set up in a beautiful park. The green grass and graceful trees lent an air of relaxation quite different from the usual harshness of a field camp. Colonel Smith agreed to arrange for the seizure of the laboratories and other places of interest to Alsos. I was to go after our three top personality targets—Doctors Georganni, Weck—and of course, Amaldi.

Perry Bailey had familiarized himself with maps of Rome. It did not take him long to reach Amaldi's residence. Children immediately surrounded our jeep. Leaving Bailey to make friends with them, I went to meet the man who had been our quarry so long.

He turned out to be as pleasant as his wife was charming. I did not confide the true reason for my call.

"Dr. Amaldi, I am with the attacking Allied forces. A number of American scientists who know you have asked me to look you up. They are concerned for your safety."

"How kind."

"Not at all. Fact is, your prominence as a scientist is so great that my government itself wishes to assure safety. Because of this, you will please consider yourself technically in the custody of the U. S. Government."

"I am flattered," he replied.

"Under no circumstances are you to leave Rome without first informing me."

Amaldi pleasantly accepted this instruction. We talked about American scientists he knew and about whom I had been briefed. All through the conversation, I was braced for criticism of our abortive efforts to get him out of Rome. He never got even close to the subject.

Finally I nudged him. "We are certainly sorry, Dr. Amaldi, to have caused you difficulty and danger last February."

He remarked that he didn't know what I was talking about.

"I am referring to the time our agent contacted you with that plan to cross the lines."

"There must be some mistake, Colonel Pash. I had not heard of such a plan."

"Do you mean to tell me, Doctor, that you were not alerted to be at a beach area late in February to be picked up by a PT boat?"

It was all news to him. At no time, he said, had he been contacted by anyone from the Allied side for any purpose. I told him that my information, obviously, was at fault and not to worry about it. But the wheels in my head were grinding out sparks.

That evening after dinner I was beginning to relax with the aid of some fine Chianti. Perry and I were discussing the events of the day. After our "capture" of Dr. Amaldi, we had caught up with Dr. Geordanni. A lively gentleman, he had been so pleased to meet us that he had dug out a bottle of old cognac, saved to celebrate the liberation of Rome.

As Perry began to go over our plans for the next day, suddenly Dr. Amaldi himself rushed into the room. Excitedly he announced that he had to leave for Naples immediately.

"By what authority?"

"Orders from the President of the United States, I understand. These orders were brought by a captain who is now downstairs. I must accompany him."

"Wait here," I said, puzzled.

I went to see this captain. In the lounge a large man in American uniform was sprawled on an easy chair. He remained seated when I introduced myself.

"Colonel, looks like you and I are going to have to reach an understanding," came from the big hulk.

I barked, "Attention!"

The harshness of my voice caught the captain by surprise.

Reflexively he snapped to order his sloppy, smug bulk propelling itself to its feet and standing tall and heavy.

"Now, what is this all about?"

"Colonel, you are interfering with an important operation. I am supposed to take Dr. Amaldi to Naples without delay."

I began to see light. "And then?"

"This is secret, Colonel. But since you got yourself into this—well, I'll tell you. I am to deliver him to The Alsos Mission in Naples."

"Captain," I said, "you are looking at The Alsos Mission. No doubt, you're from OSS. Your job was to get Dr. Amaldi out of Rome several months ago. You failed. You didn't even go after him. Now you're trying to sneak him to Naples and cook up a story of another important job done under dangerous and trying circumstances. Well, it won't work."

I was furious. Men like this captain were doing an injustice to the few in OSS who worked hard and got results—many dying in the performance of their duties.

"You have no business in Rome," I told him. "If I run across you again, I'll bring charges, and I can think of plenty. Now get out and discuss this only with your commanding officer."

By that time I think he was ready to get out of the range of my voice.

With the help of the S-Force we were able to take control of the laboratories and offices in which we expected to find information. Alsos had established a foothold in Rome. But I arranged with Washington for Maj. Richard C. Ham to leave London immediately and take over Italian operations. For I had to return to London at once.

News of the Allied landing in Normandy had reached me.

CHAPTER IV

Alsos Approved by Pentagon

Alsos had been busy since its activation for operations in Europe had been formally approved by Mr. Stimson. But on 10 June, 1944, the day I returned to London from Rome, it was still a skeleton operation. Of course, the formative days between April and June had been important. During that period the battles of Washington and London had been won.

April and most of May were devoted to the engagement of Washington, which consisted actually of skirmish after skirmish with the forces of bureaucracy. Their chief weapon was red tape. Those were the days when the overall plan of operation had to be approved and the assignment of key personnel had to be effected. The progress made was largely attributable to Col. C. P. Nicholas of the General Staff, who represented G-2's interest in Alsos, and to Maj. Robert R. Furman of General Groves' staff.

When I arrived in Washington from San Francisco on 2 April, Colonel Nicholas immediately informed me that a memorandum had been prepared for the Secretary of War's signature, without which no move could be made. But to present it to the Secretary for signature, five concurrences were required, including that of the recently formed General Staff Operations Division (OPDIV). Some members of the Division were under the impression that they were running the war, and didn't care who knew it. Colonel Nicholas warned me of possible trouble and briefed me on some of the characters I might meet. He guessed that it would take several days, if not two or three weeks, to get the concurrences. The next day I decided to hand-carry the papers, much to the amusement of Colonel Nicholas. "If you are successful," he said, "the entire government might be thrown off balance."

But by four o'clock that afternoon I had all concurrences save that of OPDIV.

In the OPDIV's front office, a large, well-rounded and loud-mouthed colonel was impressing a couple of visiting officers of higher rank. He turned to me and with a patronizing air asked, "And what is it you want, Colonel?"

Recognizing Loud-mouth as one of those about whom I had been cautioned, I undertook a trick.

"Colonel, I have a paper for Mr. Stimson's signature. It was discussed with General Groves, General Henry, Dr. Bush, Admiral Furer and your chief. All but your chief have concurred. I would like to see him, since I presume only the general officer can give me concurrence for your division."

"What made you think I can't initial the paper?"

"Well, it's for the Secretary's signature," I purred.

"Let me look at that paper." And after a glance at it, he said, "I've signed more important documents than this!"

The OPDIV concurrence was obtained, the visitors were impressed, and no doubt the OPDIV colonel was delighted.

On 4 April, with the signature of the Secretary of War on the memorandum, I took command of the Alsos Mission.

Personnel was my immediate concern. It was known that the military were very critically scrutinized by the scientists, and some strong representations had been made to G-2 with regard to the Italian operation. As a matter of fact, a direct effort developed to have someone other than myself selected to command the mission. To Brig. Gen. John Weckerling, the Deputy G-2, one of the scientists associated with the operation used such terms as "reckless," "devil-may-care" and "venturesome" to sum up his and his colleagues' opinion of me. Stanard suffered too, mostly by association. It was also suggested that a scientist with a reserve commission would best serve as a commander. General Weckerling took the wind out of the complainant's sails by asking him if, in describing the qualifications of the person he thought should command the mission, the scientist had not described himself.

It was my hope to have a well-balanced unit. Thus I felt that the number two military man should be one whose qualities would counteract my aggressiveness and unconvention-

~~SECRET~~

WDCB 1
Col. Nicholas
72536

MAY 11 1944

General Dwight D. Eisenhower,
Commanding General, U. S. Army Forces,
European Theater of Operations,
London, England.

Dear General Eisenhower:

Lt. Colonel Boris T. Pash, who will deliver this letter, has been designated Chief of the Scientific Intelligence Mission organized by G-2 of the War Department to procure intelligence of the enemies' scientific developments. The Director of the Office of Scientific Research and Development is assisting G-2 in the conduct of this mission, and I consider it to be of the highest importance to the war effort.

Colonel Pash was Chief of the Alsos Mission, which operated for similar purposes in Italy. The results obtained from that mission indicate that its activities should be extended to other regions. It is believed that considerable important information will be procured in the European Theater of Operations, particularly after the occupation of territories now under Axis control.

The scientific group of the mission will be headed by a scientist to be selected by the Office of Scientific Research and Development, and it will include the necessary additional scientists competent to seek and evaluate the information. However, your assistance is essential, and I hope that you will give Colonel Pash every facility and assistance at your disposal which will be necessary and helpful in the successful operation of this mission.

The organization and objectives of the mission are more fully explained in a memorandum to the Chief of Staff, ET USA, from Major General Clayton Bissell, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, WDGS, dated 3 May 1944.

Sincerely yours,

[illegible]

Secretary of War.

DECLASSIFIED
DOD Dir. 5200.9, Sept. 27, 1958
NMW by [illegible] date 10/5/67

COORDINATION AND R[illegible] DIV. OFF. [illegible] WAR

ORIGINAL DISPATCHED FROM
OFFICE CHIEF OF STAFF
[illegible]

~~SECRET~~

Copy for S/W

alism. That's why George Eckman was the first man whose assignment was requested.

Maj. Richard C. Ham, of Berkeley, California, was another officer in my division at Headquarters, Western Defense Command, for whom I had much respect. He was chief of the Investigative Branch, was well-trained professionally and well-qualified socially to handle temperamental scientists. Capt. Robert Blake had impressed me during our operations in Italy; I felt he would make a fine operations officer. A request went in for these two men also.

Another officer was needed who had language qualifications—German and French—and preferably extensive experience in Europe. A review of the personnel files produced the name of Lt. Reginald Augustine, currently at an Air Corps Base in Arkansas. The Pentagon wheels started slowly grinding to bring Augustine to Washington for an interview. Impatiently I telephoned Col. Kenneth Landon, the base commander. He promised to arrange for Augustine to fly to Washington, and added, "If you find him suitable, no use wasting time sending him back and forth. Just keep him there, Colonel, and we can start to formalize the transfer."

For the rest, I requested that Gerry Beatson and Carl Fiebig be ordered to London and that Ralph Cerame and Perry Bailey remain in Italy.

With this nucleus of tried men, the unit was to be expanded with personnel available in Europe.

So much for the military arm. As for selection of scientific personnel, that was not my responsibility. But the choice of the chief scientist and the senior Naval officer was of extreme interest to me. These two, with George Eckman and myself, would form the top command of Alsos.

A few days prior to my departure for London, Dr. Vannevar Bush called a meeting at which the top men of Alsos were to meet Dr. Samuel A. Goudsmit, the man chosen to be chief scientist. We met at the Office of Scientific Research and Development (OSRD) in Washington.

Sam Goudsmit, after walking into the room with Dr. Bush, appeared uncomfortable. My impression of the proceedings was that the scientists were pushing the strong qualities of their Sam, while the military were defending their "devil-may-care" and "reckless" commander. Sam Goudsmit and I were busy sizing up each other. When the meeting concluded, we gravitated to a corner. He told me, as we shook hands, that he liked the comforts of the civilized world and the quiet of a peaceful laboratory. Braving enemy fire or parachuting behind enemy lines was not his idea of recreation. It was obvious he had been exposed to the opinions of those of his colleagues who questioned the wisdom of the military in choosing me to command Alsos. But his tone reflected a somewhat guarded ridicule of those views. Obviously the man had a sense of humor. My response was in the same vein. I promised that if any jumping were involved, I would go first and prepare a soft landing for him.

Later in the day, I told Colonel Nicholas and General Groves that Sam Goudsmit and I could work together.

He was quickly confirmed as my partner. We conferred immediately and set up our plan of operation. In brief:

1. The scientific section was to decide on targets—whether personnel, installations or equipment.

2. I would then seize those targets and protect them from destruction.

3. When the area was safe for non-combatants, the scientists in whose professional fields the targets fell would be brought up to conduct the necessary investigation.

There was only one point on which Sam Goudsmit did not agree at the outset. He expected to be the only scientist to accompany the unit in the field. He contemplated that all others were to be on call to report to Europe when needed. My experience in Italy and the uncertainties of wartime travel caused me to conclude that such an arrangement would present problems when someone was needed in a hurry. But it was too early to press the issue and buck the scientists.

Despite the facade of intellectual aloofness so typical of many of our scientists of those days, my partner exhibited live human traits. It was also pleasing to note that he got along well with Dick Ham and Reg Augustine.

Considerable time was spent in the Pentagon with Colonels Nicholas, William Adams and Merillat "Mickey" Moses, all in G-2 and all key men in future Alsos Activities. It was my hope to establish an understanding that would endure although we would be separated by an ocean and the Red Tape Curtain. This really paid off.

Just two weeks earlier, my preliminary flight to London had brought considerable progress in establishing Alsos in the European Theater of Operations (ETO). General Smith, who had come up from Algiers to be Chief of Staff of the Allied Armies, had given me his blessing. Of course, I had been concerned. No commander appreciates a "bastard" unit within his command. And that was exactly the position we were in—under Washington for operational control and

under the ETO Commander for administrative and logistical support. Washington was to tell us what to do. We were to decide how to do it. The ETO was to help us do it.

Our luck had held. General Lord, the ETO Commander, had introduced me to his G-2, Col. Bryan Conrad. "If you get into complications, as I am sure you will," the General had told me, "just let Colonel Conrad handle the matter."

An excellent beginning. The more we got to know Bryan Conrad, the more we appreciated this broadminded, aggressive, good humored officer.

It was during that trip to London that I also had met Maj. Horace K. (Tony) Calvert, in charge of the Manhattan Project liaison office in London. This young officer, an attorney from Oklahoma City, was sharp, intelligent and at ease in any situation. We had devoted several days to formulating Alsos operational plans. Now, having touched all bases in Washington, it was time to return to the Foggy City.

So on Monday, 29 May 1944, one Lieutenant Colonel Pash, holding a 1-A priority, reported to flight operations at Gravely Point in Washington, D. C. This time I was returning to London to assume command of a phantom outfit.

"When would you like to leave, Colonel?" asked the young lieutenant on duty.

"On the first available plane," I replied.

At 7:30 I boarded the plane—the coldest I had been in since a flight from Fairbanks to Anchorage in December, 1942. There were no seats. Lashed to sides and deck were packages of blood plasma requiring that the plane be refrigerated. Thanks to a couple of padded blankets given to me by the pilot, I managed to walk out of the plane at Prestwick, Scotland, not completely frozen stiff.

On 10 June Alsos started preparation for its first activity —a move to the Continent. There was much contacting of staff sections which had to be involved in such a move. This was done with the large bulk of Bryan Conrad always indicating clearly that he was my guardian angel, representing General Eisenhower's authority for my actions.

By the middle of June, Sam Goudsmit, Dick Ham and Capt. H. A. "Packy" Schade, the chief of our Navy contingent, had assembled in London. Before crossing the Channel, we reviewed our program.

Our first and foremost mission, of course, was to determine

Nazi progress on the atomic bomb and learn when it could become operational.

The objectives of Alsos operations were to bear on that mission. Immediate intelligence reports, seizure of any materials or equipment relating to atomic research, seizure of scientists engaged in the work as well as the seizure of all installations and documents relating to it—all these would be objectives. Installations or equipment were to be destroyed only on specific approval from SHAEF.

Our second mission was to obtain intelligence about any enemy scientific research applicable to his military effort. This was not to conflict or detract from our primary mission.

No one had to explain to us that the objective taking us across the Channel was important. We were to enter Paris at our first chance—then seize the world-famous Dr. Joliot-Curie and his laboratory.

CHAPTER V

Mission to Brittany

Allied troops were on the Normandy peninsula, ready to break out. Square in the path of the Third Army lay the University of Rennes. The decision was made that Alsos would investigate university offices and laboratories for initial intelligence. But we were still in London when on 5 August a secret radiogram arrived from Washington.

Joliot-Curie was reported to have recently visited his summer home near L'Arcouest, on the north Brittany coast. It was reasoned that he might still be there. The message told me in no uncertain terms to get over there and check. Still ringing in my ears were the words I had heard in Washington: "Any slight delay in reaching your targets might cost us tremendous losses, or even the war. . . ." I had hardly digested the radiogram before I was calling out for Tony Calvert, Carl Fiebig and Gerry Beatson.

Many stories were coming back from Normandy, where the fighting was raging. Every soldier wanted to be there. We knew that the situation was developing rapidly. The Americans were pushing hard and could be expected to swoop into Brittany at any moment. By the end of July, Avranches and Pentaubault at the northern apex of the triangular peninsula had been taken. According to Colonel Conrad, the fast-moving tanks of General Patton's Third Army were expected to sweep south toward Rennes and west toward Dinan. They were to reach the port city of Brest, bypassing German pockets on the north coast. He suggested that I cross to Normandy and report to ETOUSA Forward, located then at Valognes. He would instruct Colonel Ford, the G-2, to furnish the necessary equipment and vehicles for our operation.

There was no choice but for me to lead this operation—it was our first. At the time, the two young but exceptionally

capable soldiers, Gerry Beatson and Carl Fiebig, constituted my entire command in Europe. I selected Beatson to accompany me.

On a borrowed British map, I pinpointed L'Arcouest—a small coastal community on the bulge of Brittany jutting into the English Channel. Located just north of Paimpol, the village lay about 125 miles west of Avranches and 220 miles from ETOUSA Forward at Valognes.

On 8 August, Colonel Conrad's administrative officer, Major Gerber, brought our orders. The next day a cross-Channel courier plane landed us at an improvised airstrip on Omaha Beach, famed landing stage of General Eisenhower's invading armies.

The countryside bore the scars of intensive battle. The local people were still not adjusted. They seemed to be wandering aimlessly—unable to realize that at last the days of oppression were over.

Near Valognes the portents of a major headquarters became apparent.

At ETOUSA Forward, we reached Colonel Ford at once. He suggested a morning departure, but I insisted on taking off without delay. My only concession was that we have a meal, during which time Colonel Ford could have his men prepare everything for our trip. As we left for the mess hall, Gerry remarked, "I thought you'd never get to it, Chief."

"Get to what?" I asked. "The fact that we want to leave immediately?"

"Hell, no, sir. The fact that I'm starved even if you're not."

The thirty miles to the 12th Army Group (Forward) was covered in much less time than I had anticipated, considering the condition of the road and the heavy movement of combat and support vehicles. In the G-2 van, located for concealment with other headquarters vehicles in a forest, we found Brig. Gen. Eddie Sibert leaning over a map, listening to a report from one of his officers.

I outlined the purpose of our visit and my tentative scheme of action. He in turn gave me the latest information on the tactical situation, which at the time was somewhat confused.

"You'd better clear through Oscar Koch at Third Army Headquarters. He's the G-2 and will give you more immediate information. Here, give him this note." The general scribbled on a sheet from a G-2 memo pad:

HEADQUARTERS
~~First U.S. Army Group~~
ASST. CHIEF OF STAFF, G-2

To: G-2 Third Army
G-2 VIII Corps

Lt. Col. Pash, Inf
AGO Card A 126044
is travelling for the
G-2 W.D. in the
interests of secret
technical developments.
It is requested that
he be given every
assistance and
freedom of action
within areas under
the control of your
headquarters.

G-2 VIII Corps 10 Aug.
Col Reese — any help
would be appreciated.
Koch

E. L. Sibert
Asst. Chief of Staff, G-2

To G-2 Third Army
G-2 VIII Corps
Lt. Col. Pash, Infantry, AGO Card A-126044, is travelling for the G-2, War Department, in the interests of secret technical developments. It is requested that he be given every assistance and freedom of action within areas under the control of your headquarters.

E. L. Sibert

We headed for Avranches early the next morning. One could not miss the signs that battle had just passed through here and that the Germans were doing everything possible to stop General Patton's advance. On several occasions we came across knocked-out American tanks and half-tracks. Farther down the road would usually be found the ambush weapon, a German 88 or Tiger tank in turn knocked out by relentlessly advancing American armor. I could well understand a comment heard at Twelfth Army Group headquarters: "Patton filled his tanks with gas, threw away his radio so that higher headquarters could not bother him, and is knocking hell out of the Germans. We don't know exactly where he is, but he is moving ahead."

At Lucky Forward, Colonel Koch told me that the northern coast of Brittany was not yet cleared. He suggested that I go through Colonel Reeves, the G-2 of the VIII Corps, which was directly responsible for the operation in that area. He jotted an addition on General Sibert's note and handed it back to me. He also cautioned me about conditions in the field once I got closer to the VIII Corps area. Apparently its divisions had rolled through so rapidly that stray German groups or individuals might still be encountered.

Colonel Koch was brief in his note to the G-2, VIII Corps:

G-2 VII Corps 10 Aug.
Col. Reeves—any help would be appreciated.

Koch

It was mighty pleasing to be able to get such a vital document passed through two headquarters in such a short time and without enclosures, tabs and other bureaucratic refinements.

The Germans still held several strong-points, of which Brest and St. Malo were the more formidable ones. Moreover, the bulge in the north of Brittany was also in German hands. Our target was on the northeast side of that bulge. The Sixth U. S. Armored Division faced Brest and elements of an infantry division were reducing the St. Malo fortifications. Major General Ernest, with his Task Force A that had recently swept west along the St. Brions-Marlaix Road, had the mission of clearing German resistance from the north coast of Brittany. Task Force A was mopping up along the

coast as it moved from the west toward our Paimpol area. Colonel Reeves estimated that it might take a few days to open up the area. But from the information I picked up, it seemed to me that a drive to Paris could materialize in the near future. I had to be ready for it.

Inasmuch as a few days would elapse before operations could be undertaken in the Paimpol region, I decided to return to London. There our unit should have grown in size through the addition of Captain Blake, Lieutenant Augustine and George Eckman, who was to be my deputy. Sam Goudsmit was also there, and we had some attached military specialists, including Col. Martin C. Chittick, Chemical Warfare Service, in civilian life Director of Research for Sun Oil.

It was my thought that in London I could start George Eckman on arrangements for the Paris operation. All information about our targets had to be put together and any required intelligence gathered. It was also essential that I decide with Sam Goudsmit and "Packy" Schade how to get our scientists to France once the time was ripe.

On 10 August, we started back to Valognes. It would be difficult to find anyone who could handle a jeep better than Gerry, but that ride back taxed him to the limit. Consider the plight of a single jeep bucking endless columns of tanks and trucks hurrying toward battle. To make matters worse, we had to detour along a narrow rural road leading to Coutances. The dirt roads in Normandy were shaped like a hog's back and rains had left them slippery. The hedges were about all that kept our vehicle from sliding off. We were making our way north in the darkness with only the slit (cat-eye) lamps of the jeep showing. Moving relentlessly south into the combat area was the 7th Armored Division. Slipping and squirming, the drivers were usually unable to see us. On several occasions Gerry had to climb the hedges to get out of the way of the menacing tanks. It was under similar circumstances that Bob Traynor, the correspondent from the *Los Angeles Times* whom we had befriended at Anzio, had been killed a few weeks before. The treads of a slipping tank had pulled his jeep under.

Gerry knew that a stop was out of the question. He sweated it out through hours of what proved to be the major portion of the 7th Armored Division, more detours and struggles with convoys, MP's and shell-holes. In the early

morning we finally reached Valognes. There I reported to the G-2 so that my flight to London could be arranged.

Arriving in London, I was encouraged to find that the expected officers had joined us. Our operational staff was now of significant proportions. George Eckman could be depended on to take over the unit in my absence and to represent us on the Combined Intelligence Objectives Subcommittee (CIOS)—a special group establishing priorities for intelligence targets. The British were trying to grab the initiative but I put up strong resistance. George could be depended on to continue that policy. This would leave me free to remain in the field. Bob Blake with his combat experience, and Reg Augustine with his background knowledge of Western Europe and fluency in languages, would give us good field strength. Since it was my plan not to return to London after leaving it this time, the next few days were spent developing an understanding with George Eckman regarding operational procedures, discussing with Sam Goudsmit and Captain Shade the employment of scientists and, above all, arranging for information to flow back to our headquarters in London and for intelligence to reach us in the field. Tony Calvert made himself so valuable in developing the needed intelligence that I decided to include him in our Paris group.

But there remained some pressing problems to resolve. Among them was the status of our scientific group.

Several times I had discussed the matter with Sam Goudsmit but we still did not see eye to eye. Sam believed that the job of the scientific personnel, other than himself, began when a target was actually in our hands. Consequently he saw no need for scientists to be permanently attached to us. My opinion was that we should consider the numbers and kinds of scientists our project would require and have key men in each field available in the theater—not only to promptly exploit captured targets but also to assist in planning out moves. It was my feeling that Sam, lacking experience with military operations, was approaching ours as he might a problem in a laboratory. Because of my difference with Sam, and because it became clear to me that the unit should be strengthened by the addition of CIC personnel, I wrote a letter to Colonel Nicholas in which both points were made.

The War Department was not making things easy for us. The reply of the very capable Alsos liaison officer, Capt. Howard Osborn, described some of the difficulties we faced. However, it also made plain that as long as there were on the General Staff such men as Colonel Nicholas and Colonel (Mickey) Moses—the latter having given us a good round-about assist—we could hope for continued support. Osborn's letter read in part:

> I have realized your need for permanently assigned scientists in the field and have done all I could to bring this about. Dr. Goudsmit has been reluctant to recognize this need, and still feels that their job begins when the first target actually becomes physically available. I feel that in this case he has failed in at least a portion of his responsibility . . . I have specifically stated to Dr. Goudsmit time and time again that it is physically impossible for you to handle both administration and the technical planning, and he has repeatedly stated that he does not wish to become involved in "committee meetings" in London . . . Your CIC request was given to Colonel Moses for preparation of a negative reply despite my efforts to the contrary. Colonel Moses refused action on the basis that it was an administrative matter for Colonel Adams, but prepared a memo backing you up . . ."

This was a critical time for Alsos. Still, I had reason to be cheered. A big step forward along the lines I favored, had been made in support of our Mediterranean office. Maj. Dick Ham, in charge there, had been doing well, I had received many favorable comments about him from field commanders as well as the men with whom he was associated. But there had not been enough progress made in exploiting scientific targets, which was difficult for Dick, a non-scientist, to handle. In my letters to Colonel Nicholas I had asked for a scientist to be sent to Italy. When our main unit caught up with me later, I learned from Osborn's letter that Sam Goudsmit had selected, and G-2 had approved, a physicist from Northwestern University, Maj. Russel Fisher.

On 14 August, having returned to Valognes, I found Gerry Beatson impatient to get going. He was stocked with enough supplies—including three extra "jerry" cans of gasoline

chained to the jeep—to carry us across France. I told Colonel Ford that we would be leaving and could be reached either through Lucky Forward or General Ernest's Task Force A. As Gerry and I moved down the road toward Avranches, Gerry was silent—unusual for that young lad. "Gerry, everything all right at Valognes?"

"Sure, Chief," he replied.

"Still in their good graces?" I persisted. "Were you up with the bugle like everyone else?" I knew Gerry liked his sleeping bag up to the last minute.

"Well, no, Chief—but I didn't have to be." And before I could jump on him, he explained. "You know the stuff you left with me? Well, I didn't want anything stolen so I put it all in my tent. Next morning, when the bugle sounded, the "top" came along, kicking at everyone's feet and saying 'come on, you so-and-so's—get moving.' When he kicked at me he must have dislodged your helmet. It rolled out in front of him with the lieutenant-colonel's insignia staring him in the face. As he started to apologize, I just grumbled and rolled over. Well, sir, the next night I placed the fine-looking helmet of yours right at the tent entrance with the white oak-leaf plain to see. In the morning I could hear the sarge's voice drop to a whisper as he came near my tent.

Gerry may have been a reluctant riser, but he had a lot of initiative, common sense and know-how—and a sense of humor. In just a matter of days I was to learn that he was also loyal and courageous. In short, he was a typical American soldier and I was proud to be with him on the battlefield.

Reaching VIII Corps, we were brought up to date on General Ernest's progress. He was then in the vicinity of Lannion, moving towards Paimpol.

"You'll not run into any trouble. Just keep alert," concluded Colonel Reeves.

I nodded. "I'll move out early in the morning, and thanks for your help."

"When is early, Chief?" asked Gerry Beatson as we headed for our pup tents.

"When I wake up."

"That's what I was afraid of." He sighed. "Nobody in the Army gets up as early as you do, Chief."

Not to disappoint him, I was up at four A.M. and anxious to move. In spite of his protestations of the night before, I found Gerry also up and packing. Our big concern now was

the possibility of snipers. To protect ourselves from the front, we tied a bedroll across the hood.

At about noon on 15 August, we were stopped at an outpost and allowed to pass after identifying ourselves. At the next sentry group, we were again challenged. After satisfying the sergeant in charge that we were friends, I asked him if he could tell me the location of Task Force A.

"You're in the middle of it, Colonel," he said. "This is General Ernest's CP." One of the men climbed into our jeep and guided us through some hedges to a field near a large farmhouse. A well-trampled section of the field was lined by pyramidal tents on two sides. Several jeeps were parked along a third side. Near one tent some officers were consulting. Recognizing him by his insignia, I walked over and reported to General Ernest. He greeted me cordially and led me to a field table. Pointing to a map, he told me that his force was having some difficulty at Lezardieux, but he expected to clear it up in a day and move on to Paimpol, then sweep up to L'Arcouest.

German resistance at Lezardieux started to crumble that afternoon and our armor pushed ahead. It was evident that what enemy forces were in the area had been withdrawing rapidly. This meant that they were concentrating in the fortified area at L'Arcouest where the Alsos target was located.

I thought it probable that a man of Joliot-Curie's reputation would be known in the area. Hence my inquiries started as soon as we passed Lezardieux. They were indirect inquiries, for if the Nazis got wind of an interest in a specific individual no doubt they would try to remove or possibly destroy him. In any case, my questions came to nothing.

The main advance paused early that evening. Gerry and I sat in an apple orchard among the tanks and halftracks of the headquarters unit. I seized the chance to write my wife a letter. My anxiety to get it off was partly dictated by rumors that the Germans had done extensive mining and booby-trapping in the coastal area where probably Gerry and I would be working the next day.

With the break of dawn the tanks moved out. As we pushed ahead at a fairly steady pace, the apathy of the local males astonished me. Of course, many men must have fled the area earlier in the war or must have been taken away by the Germans; but from previous reports and rumors, one expected to see armed Frenchmen spoiling for a fight and wish-

ing to join the *soldats Americains*. Such was not the case.

We entered Paimpol about noon on 17 August. Here the townsfolk were jubilant as Task Force A moved through the streets. They tried to halt American armored vehicles in order to express thanks and greet the liberators with a celebration. But rifle fire could be heard just outside Paimpol. Gerry pulled our jeep to one side and stopped behind a display window which, like those in many French towns, extended a foot or so into the street. We were immediately surrounded by women, older men and children who covered our jeep with flowers.

L'Arcouest was a one-street coastal resort and fishing community. The street ran into a dead end at a large stone house. A church on the east side was surrounded by a two-foot stone wall which also enclosed a cemetery. On the opposite side were a couple of stores and a wine cellar, the latter quickly spotted by Gerry. A wide lane led from the stone house toward the rocky shore where the Germans had built the fortification where they were now holed up. Several American armored halftracks, which had brought in some of our infantry, took positions in the street.

Our boys replied occasionally to the German fire. The Germans were cut off, but so far had declined to surrender. A huge American sergeant crawled along the line of infantrymen, giving instructions. He was having a hard time keeping all of himself under cover. On one occasion, though he managed to keep his head down, a German sharpshooter must have spied that portion of the sergeant's anatomy which he could not keep down. The sergeant gave a terrified yell, rolled over a couple of times and took cover behind a large rock, calling for medics.

"Hey, fellas, the Sarge is hit. You should have seen the sparks when lead hit lead."

"Sarge, that black book with Paris addresses won't do you any good now."

The sergeant failed to appreciate all the humor. It was certain that some time was to pass before he would sit down.

Gerry and I took cover in an armored halftrack. I had been told in London that a Professor Anger, a relative of Joliot, lived in L'Arcouest and could be contacted. Contacting was what I intended to do without delay. And there was no delay. As we crouched in the halftrack, a tall elderly gentleman approached, completely indifferent to flying bullets.

Much to my surprise, he announced that his name was Anger. When I queried him about his unconcern for rifle fire, he replied that the Germans would not harm the local folks at this stage of the fight. His deduction must have been correct, for a number of people appeared on the street.

I asked Anger if he knew anything about Joliot-Curie, explaining that a friend of mine, an American scientist, had once visited Joliot in this area. Anger replied that Joliot had a house in L'Arcouest but had not been there for some time. Of course, Anger told us, the house was in a restricted area, a wood along one of the coastal strips which the Germans had mined. So Anger himself had not recently visited the place. I identified the area on an intercepted military map, and sure enough it was marked as mined. I glanced at Gerry.

Turning to Anger, I asked, "Can you show us how to get to the Joliot house?"

"*Certainement*," he replied. "I take you to the inlet below the village."

Anger led us down the road to a spot on the fringe of a wooded area. Pointing to a path thick with weeds and brush, he said, "*Voila, mes amis.* I shall return to the village and drink to your health and safety."

As Anger left us, Gerry said, "Chief, I've had more experience with booby-traps. It stands to reason that I should take the lead."

He got no argument from me. We started crawling through the wooded area. Gerry picked his way cautiously through the tall weeds, probing for trip-wires or signs of personnel mines. I kept watch against any surprises from the enemy. In this manner we gradually reached a more organized landscape and a more open area, in the center of which stood a large stone house. Joliot-Curie's house.

No sooner did we start to move toward the house than we came under fire of friend and foe.

We ducked behind cover but the firing continued, pinning us down. Our discomfort was increased by the fact that we didn't know how far off the Germans were or whether they would send out patrols. At last the firing slowed down and Gerry approached the front door, finding it slightly ajar.

We crawled into the house with our carbines ready. To my astonishment, there was not a stick of furniture or anything else to be found in it. I stood guard to prevent any surprise while Gerry quickly inspected closet doors, stairs and other

likely places for booby-traps. He reported no traps—and no papers, boxes or other loose materials. We realized that we had come on a wild-goose chase.

Meanwhile the firing had ceased. The troops on both sides of the inlet must have decided that a stray dog or other animal had been causing the movement in the brush. We hoped! The next problem was to leave without having our hides perforated. We approached the front door, got set, dashed through and hit the ground. Two slugs smacked into the door inches above Gerry's head. The firing picked up. We crawled to the wooded area while both sides peppered the house with machine-gun and rifle fire.

Shortly after our return to the village the Germans must have decided that they had put up enough of a fight to save face. A white flag appeared and soon the defenders, led by a few Nazi officers, marched out in surrender.

We were seated in the jeep, watching them, when Gerry said:

"We should have waited. We still wouldn't have found anything—but we wouldn't have had to go through hell."

I nodded. That short crawl to the house and back had been one of the longest trips I had ever taken.

CHAPTER VI

Total Mission

It was a relief to be back in London. I found our group there impatient to move to the Continent in the hope of developing clues to our prime target: the Nazi atomic effort.

When I had passed through 12th Army Group headquarters on the return from Brittany, General Siebert had told me that the fall of Paris was imminent. He had indicated that we should join the 12th Army Group T-Force, commanded by an old cavalryman, Col. Tommy Tompkin. The T-Force—counterpart of the S-Force in Italy—was to host the various intelligence groups having missions in Paris.

Gerry had remained at ETOUSA Forward in Valognes. He was to have ready for my return two jeeps completely equipped and stocked with rations, ammo, gas and anything else he considered necessary. I had also given him another assignment. Colonel Ford had promised to attach to Alsos an enlisted man of my choice. Gerry was to make that choice. My only stricture was that the man speak French.

Once in London I could sit down and review the situation.

Did Alsos really have a mission as tangible as other combat-intelligence missions?

No. Our mission was a total mission. Upon its results was to depend the determination that the enemy had or had not the capability not only to defeat the Allies but to destroy them as well. Our priority objective was to determine if he had a super-weapon and if so, to destroy or assist in destroying or otherwise putting out of commission this weapon. In fact, the most sought for and hoped for result of our effort was to find that Hitler did not have the weapon. As George Eckman expressed it, we were going to risk our necks in the hope of finding nothing!

"Which reminds me, Boris," said George Eckman, as we

were discussing matters. "Just before I left Washington, news arrived of your Brittany venture. 'Tell that crazy Russian to send his men on these operations. He is supposed to be commanding the entire show and should stay in London,' the Pentagon advised me."

"George, here's what you can advise them. Their job is to tell us what to do. I don't want them telling us how to do it!"

As we were poised to hop across the channel, in addition to Eckman the unit consisted of Captain Blake, operations officer; Lieutenant Augustine; Special Agents Beatson and Fiebig, and PFC's Nicholas Dolida and Louis Lolli. Dolida was a graduate of Fordham University, where he had majored in physics. He was certainly a welcome addition. Lolli was our office force—a most dependable and efficient office manager. Major Ham, with Special Agents Perry O. Bailey and Ralph T. Cerame, constituted our Mediterranean detachment, operating out of the Rome office. On 7 August, our liaison office in the Pentagon became operational under Captain Osborn, with Miss Hariette Zimmerle as the secretary.

Sam Goudsmit had been making hay in Washington. He now had assigned to Alsos, although they were not yet in London, such outstanding scientists as Doctors Walter F. Colby, who was in the Pentagon office and active in shaping up the scientific side of our work, along with C. N. Hickman, Mark May, W. A. Noyes, Jr., and Hans Reese, M.D.

In addition to Colonel Chittick, the Army had assigned to the Alsos mission Col. Everick Kutchko, also a technical expert Captain "Packy" Schade, one of the top Navy technical experts, was organizing our Navy contingent. He expected Capt. Wendell T. Roop and Comdr. A. L. Mumma to join us.

With the unit gradually shaping up, the work of developing the needed intelligence was also progressing well. Sam Goudsmit had obtained much information on Joliot-Curie and his Paris laboratories. Goudsmit had been spending a good deal of time with Tony Calvert, whom I had come to consider a member of our unit though he had not actually been assigned to us. Tony, who represented General Groves in London and who had developed considerable intelligence for us, was the ideal choice to accompany me. Sam Goudsmit had briefed him on the best action for us to take in the initial steps of our contact with Joliot. George Eckman, with the help of our operational group, had obtained information on Paris, particularly on the area in which Joliot's laboratory

was located. He also gave me the address of Joliot's residence.

Our plan for the Paris operation had not changed. The operational group would consist of Tony Calvert, Gerry Beatson, the man we were to pick up at Valognes and myself.

Rennes, which was cleared by elements of the 8th U.S. Division on 4 August, was to be a preliminary target. It was hoped we could pick up some information there. Then, depending on the situation, we were to conduct any other intelligence operations which might develop from Rennes, and which would be directed primarily toward learning more about the activities of German scientists in France.

But Paris was to be the first real test of whether military and scientific personnel could cooperate in a sensitive operation in the combat zone. If there were ever any two groups considered incompatible, these were they.

The urgency of securing Joliot-Curie was again impressed on me by Washington. "A delay of a day beyond the entry of Allied troops into Paris might have serious adverse results," was the comment from the Pentagon.

After reaching Joliot-Curie, we were to deliver him to London for questioning by Allied scientists. His laboratory and documents were to be taken over by the U.S. Army until a determination could be made of his interest in or knowledge of Nazi nuclear developments.

Captain Blake, Carl Fiebig and Nick Dolida were to compose our second echelon. They were to cross the Channel a day behind us and proceed to Paris as soon as word of its fall was received. Goudsmit and the three military technical men were to come to Paris when the situation was stabilized. In Sam Goudsmit's words, before leaving he would want to be sure that "everything was safe, convenient accommodations were available and a comfortable car or plane provided for the trip." Augustine was to bring the scientific group to Paris. George Eckman was to keep our London office going, assisted by Louis Lolli. In the event that our advance group was lost, George Eckman was to assume command of the mission and Blake's group was to become the operational team in the field.

Late in the afternoon of 19 August, no flight being available for that day or the next, Tony Calvert and I left for Portsmouth. From there we could cross on one of the Navy patrol boats plying the Channel.

Our vessel was small and the sea was rough. I remained on

deck rather than go below where it was warm and protected from the wind. This because of my desire for fresh air—and my concern about reports of mines and subs.

We found Gerry waiting in the G-2 area of the Valognes headquarters, ready to take off.

"Well, Gerry," I asked, "did you pick a sidekick for yourself?"

"I certainly did, Chief, and he has a tommy-gun."

Since we had been packing only carbines, our limited firepower had been causing us concern.

"Good," I said. "Have you arranged transportation and supplies?"

"Everything, Chief. All you have to do is to get Nat Leonard transferred to our outfit, get the two jeeps assigned to us by the Headquarters Commandant, and sign for the supplies." He led me to an area concealed by trees and a low wooden building. There I found Alsos "Forward" ready to move. Next to one of the jeeps stood a tall blond soldier, Nathaniel W. Leonard. A university graduate from New York, he spoke French and German fluently. He told me that he was a clerk-typist in the G-2 section, was bored with inactivity and wanted to see something of the war. With Nat, we inherited a friendly little Normandy shepherd pup whom we named Alsos. That would give us an excuse for the use of our code name.

Next morning, Gerry and I made a fast run to the Twelfth Army Group to inform General Sibert of my plan to check the University of Rennes and then start working toward Paris. The General told me that the capture of Paris was to be effected by the French Second Armored Division under General Leclerc, and that the initial entry was to be made by French troops. All Allied intelligence teams were to be assembled with the T-Force, which was to rendezvous on 23 August in the area of Chateauneuf en Thim about sixty miles west of Paris.

By this time we were pretty well acquainted with the roads of Western France and so reached Rennes quickly. The city was full of American troops, making me fearful that anything interesting left at the university by the Germans might be wrecked by our own side. For that reason, and because we had only a day to spare, each of use went about his business.

Tony Calvert and Nat Leonard inspected the various offices and laboratories, picking up references, manuscripts, study courses, catalogues and other literature relating to the science department of this university and other universities under German control. Meanwhile, Gerry had contacted the CIC Detachment and learned that two of the university's science professors were in town. They were promptly asked to assist in our search for documents. With help, we located several German publications dated as late as March, 1944.

I was anxious to get the documents back to London so that Sam Goudsmit could start sifting through them. The safest and surest way was to have the CIC deliver them to Colonel Conrad. At first the Detachment Commander was not sure he should do this but after reading my special pass from Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF), and General Sibert's note, he changed his mind. That SHAEF pass was a magic wand at that time.

The documents we had liberated were to prove of considerable value, particularly in developing locations of German scientists and areas in which certain types of scientific research were being conducted. Catalogues of various universities with listings of professors and their schedules were of particular value. In addition to the documents taken at the university, Gerry had successfully scrounged several photographic albums—always good intelligence material—and postcards depicting major cities including Paris, Brussels, Strasbourg, Heidelberg and Berlin. He also obtained a plan of Paris which was extremely handy and contained details of interest to us. Toward evening, feeling satisfied with our results, we met in the building occupied by the CIC. After a quick review of our loot, the plan of Paris and a few postcard pictures of that city were retained for orientation purposes. The rest of the material was carefully packed and marked. By that time darkness had fallen. We decided to spend the night in Rennes rather than risk another cat's-eye ride amid a stream of military vehicles.

Late next day, as we reached Le Mans, the heavens opened up. Because of crowded and confused conditions there, no quarters were available. Soaked to the skin, two of us slept in a jeep.

Early on 23 August we moved over secondary roads toward Chateauneuf, looking for the T-Force. It is not too difficult to find one of the units of a large military force. One

simply goes downward from top headquarters to each successively lower headquarters until the unit is found. But to locate an independently operating unit is no easy job—especially in a foreign countryside dotted with small villages, and over which foreign armies are moving in all directions.

Near Chateauneuf we caught up with an armored cavalry squadron bivouacked in a small forest. We accepted the kind invitation of the commanding officer to have a hot meal. In response to my question he said he knew nothing about a T-Force.

"Why are you looking for that particular outfit?"

"We are to go into Paris with them. I'm on a special mission and have no combat cover."

The colonel perked up immediately. "I'm sitting here without a mission, detached from my regiment and, I'm sure, forgotten. No one will miss us. Give me a directive to join you. By golly, I'll get you into Paris or any other place.

The offer was declined, because I could still feel the breath of Washington on my neck. But two days later I was kicking myself for not having accepted the offer.

We spent a part of the evening with the squadron, checked our supplies, made a few adjustments and moved on. It soon got very dark. And we were nearing the sensitive combat zone. There was no need to risk being ambushed or jumped on, so after driving thirty more minutes we picked a spot near some trees in an open field and turned in.

Early morning of 24 August found us searching again for the T-Force. After some leads which did not pan out, we roamed the countryside along very poor roads—the fields were smoother. Finally we drove into Chartres, the old French cathedral town. There we received our first positive information about the T-Force, placing that elusive unit in the immediate vicinity of Rambouillet.

Rambouillet was reached about noon, and shortly T-Force markers led us to a small but fine country chateau with a large veranda in the rear, opening into a formal garden. While Tony Calvert and I went to find Tommy Tompkins, Gerry and Nat started unloading the jeeps. Colonel Tompkins greeted us cordially. Later, with a tasty and filling lunch under our belts, we sat down with Colonel Tompkins and his operations officer to discuss our plans.

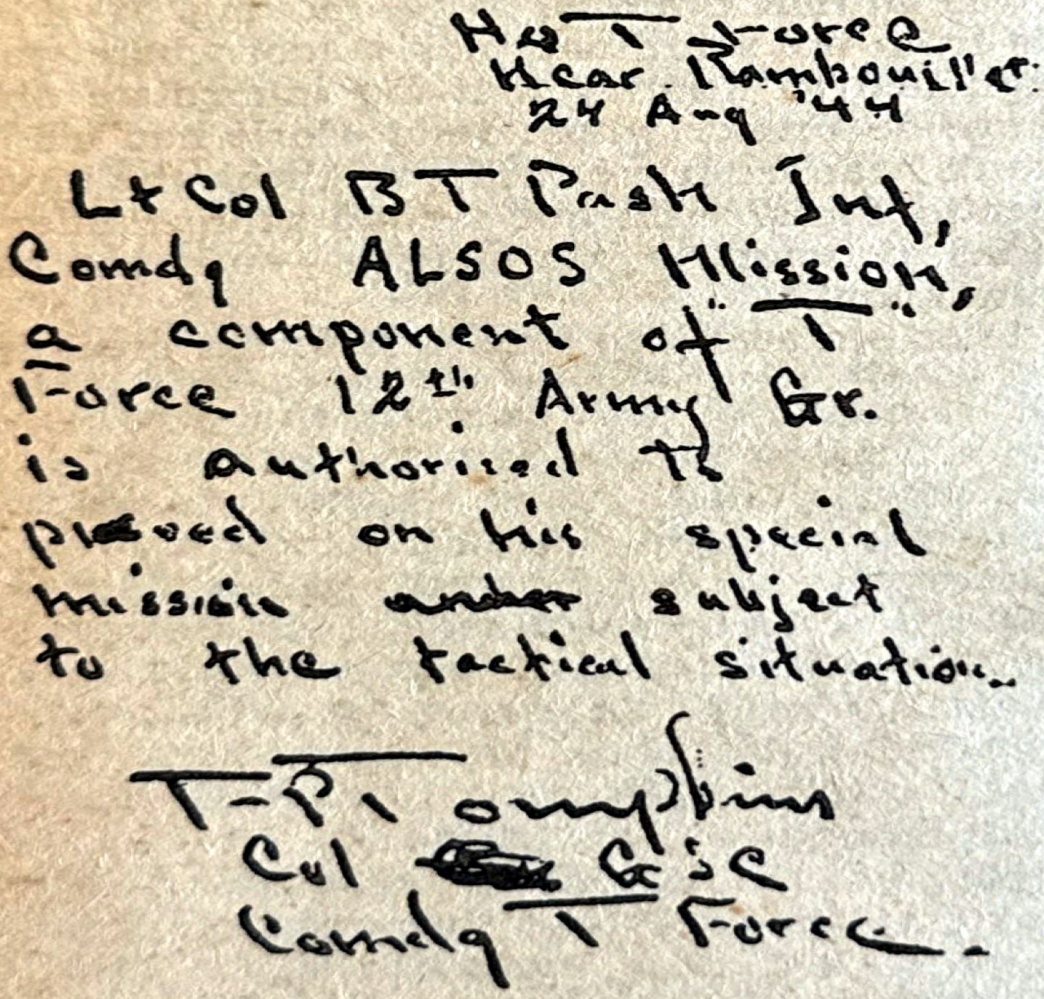
The T-Force was poised for its entry into Paris. It would move out the moment word arrived that the leading French

elements were in the city. But he told us that the Germans were offering considerable resistance on the Paris approaches and there was a German force in the Versailles area.

"Tommy, I want to go in with whatever unit breaks through first."

"Two groups are hitting Paris, both from the south," he said. "One, slightly to the east, is an American unit—presently at Palaiseau. The other, the main French force, is pushing up the Orleans road—National Highway 20."

"How about my trying with one of those? I don't think Washington would like me just sitting around."



Colonel Tompkins tore a sheet out of a small notebook, scribbled on it and handed it to me. "Here you are, Boris. My base and headquarters will be at the Petit Palais on the Champs Elysees. You can report to me there later." The note read:

Headquarters T-Force, near Rambouillet

24 August 44

Lt. Col. B. T. Pash, Inf., Commanding Alsos Mission, a component of T-Force, 12th Army Gp, is authorized to proceed on his special mission subject to the tactical situation.

T. P. Tompkins, Col GSC
Cmdg. T-Force

The note was all that I needed to get moving. My idea was to skirt Paris from the south and pick a spot where we could slip in. I explained to Tommy that my immediate objective was the College de France where Joliot-Curie had his lab.

"If you don't hear from me, will you check the laboratory when you get to Paris? And our second group under Blake has instructions to report to you in Paris—so if you can't locate us, let him know."

Moments later our two-jeep force left for its breakthrough.

CHAPTER VII

Lightning-A Strikes Paris

Moving out of Rambouillet over narrow country roads, we began working our way toward Palaiseau where we hoped to make our first try. With the Nazis pushed back, the ranks of "liberators" kept growing by the hour. More and more Frenchmen could be seen with burp-guns slung over their shoulders or automatics stuck in their belts. But the kind of clothing they wore and the condition it was in indicated plainly that they had become active partisans only after it was pretty safe to do so.

Scattered groups of local inhabitants were gathered just outside the villages excitedly discussing events. They directed pleased but cautious glances at passing American troops. Late that afternoon, we entered a gaily decorated Palaiseau celebrating the arrival of the Allies. Red, white and blue bunting decorated shop signs and trailed from windows.

Two American armored vehicles were parked on the street leading to the north. A lieutenant informed me that the commanding officer was just beyond the city with the squadron's main force, and that beyond that, on higher ground, were strong German defensive positions.

We parked our jeeps behind a halftrack and quickly were surrounded by laughing, chattering French folk who pressed bottles of wine on us. I walked forward to find the squadron commander. On the outskirts of town I spotted a lieutenant colonel standing with his operations officer next to halftrack. I showed my credentials, including Colonel Tompkin's note, and was given the latest situation.

The German defensive deployment, covering the approaches to Paris, was strong. It was estimated that about 2,000 enemy troops manned the positions. The armored squadron was there to keep them from breaking out. This

was of no help to me. I checked the lieutenant colonel's map and found some side roads which in all probability the enemy did not hold in any strength. It seemed to me that by making use of those roads we could sneak into Paris. After explaining my plan, I asked if the commanding officer would make a feint at the German positions to draw them in, at the same time covering my unit with a small force until the German lines were passed. After that, we would be on our own. But the colonel would not buy this, considering that it would be only a matter of hours before Paris would be entered.

He could not know the nature of my mission nor the urgency impressed on me by Washington. My orders were to seize our target at the first possible opportunity. But I lacked authority to override tactical command.

It was getting late and would soon be dark. We had to leave Palaiseau without delay if the French column reported at Arpajon, to the east, was to be located. I trudged back to the square. There the locals were still giving my men the big welcome.

"Let's say goodbye, men. We're pulling out. I have the route and will drive the lead jeep."

I jumped in and waved to the townsfolk. As we started turning our jeeps, panic broke loose. The French began shouting, "The Americans are leaving!"

In no time, the French flags disappeared, the gay bunting was being pulled down, windows and doors were being shut. Obviously the local people had mistaken our move as signaling a general withdrawal by the armored unit, and were reacting to the thought of the Germans returning.

Leonard shouted to those close to his jeep that the main American force would remain in Palaiseau and that the Germans weren't coming back.

We headed directly south, again following side roads in order to avoid military traffic and the celebrating French. A short distance out of Palaiseau some excited, armed Frenchmen stopped us. They swore that not far away a group of Germans had holed up and were making occasional forays into the countryside. The Frenchmen wanted us to mount an attack on the Germans. Involvement in a fight was the last thing I wanted, so it was suggested to those brave French partisans that they do a little battling themselves. They became rather unpleasant until Leonard told them to save their fight for the Germans.

As we worked our way east, I had in mind that the map indicated quite a network of roads, several of them leading toward Paris. This might be an opportunity. The homes in the area looked peaceful and there was no sign of troops, friendly or hostile. We moved cautiously, driving through patches of woods or between rows of houses. We must have been approaching the heavily populated outskirts of Paris inside the Route de Versailles when rifle fire came at us from several directions.

As dawn broke on the morning of 25 August, we struck out for Arpajon and the French column. The first people we met were French countryfolk. They were gaily dressed for the occasion. As we passed them they waved and shouted joyfully, *"Paris est libre!"* Did that mean we were late?

At about five in the morning we reached Grande Route Vingt (Highway No. 20) just north of Arpajon and there, parked on the side of the road, were the forward elements of the famous Deuxieme Division Blindee Francaise.

Tanks, armored personnel carriers and other vehicles of this famous Second French Armored Division were parked bumper to bumper. It was obvious that no vehicle could move unless the one ahead got out of the way. What havoc two or three Nazi "Tigers" could play if they should come rolling down the road. And the crews of these vehicles were in about the same state of readiness as their column. The folks from the surrounding area were out in force to celebrate and to "help" the crews get their vehicles in shape and, naturally, to share with those crews their morning meal.

We had to stay clear of this outfit! To do so we would have to avoid attention. I drove my jeep into a side road and Gerry followed. We huddled in conference. I told Leonard we wanted to talk to the G-2 but did not want to answer any questions. Grasping the situation quickly, he climbed into my jeep. As we approached the column once more, he stopped a French officer and inquired for the Division Intelligence Officer. The Frenchman pointed toward the sign which would identify the vehicle in which the G-2, a lieutenant colonel, was located. Having reached the indicated position toward the front of the column we spotted three French officers leaning over a map. A motorcycle rider in civilian clothes was talking to them.

It had been my intention to talk with the G-2 in general terms about my need to get into Paris and to ask his assis-

tance. But the sight of several men sitting astride their motorcycles, apparently waiting to spread any exciting news, was sufficient reason for me to decide that if we wanted our interest in Paris to be kept secret, it would be best not to speak to the G-2. Furthermore, it was evident that some time would pass before the glorious Deuxieme would move. So I just rolled my jeep right past the lieutenant colonel and stopped about fifty yards beyond the head of the column.

"Men, we'll never get going if we wait to clear through this outfit. Let's keep moving." We gunned the jeeps into motion. But some distance up the road we ran into a French checkpoint. A mustachioed French major and his small detachment were manning a barrier in the middle of the highway. He signaled us to stop. Nat Leonard came up to translate. The major impressed on us that he had a very "important" assignment—to prevent any unit from advancing beyond that point without General Leclerc's authority. This was the farthest point of advance of Allied troops.

Knowing that the French were anxious to enter Paris first, a scheme quickly developed in my mind.

"Nat, tell the major that three American tanks left the cavalry squadron to the west. The Corps Commander has sent me to round them up before they get into Paris."

Hearing this, the French major became very agitated. We must go on and stop those tanks! He asked my name, had a sergeant register our vehicle numbers, bade us good luck and waved us on. The barrier was removed, and from here on our unit comprised the first Allied vehicles and troops seen by the French in this area since the Nazi occupation.

The emotion of the people was beyond description. After traveling about a mile we came to a village. Its population was out *en masse*. The roadway was lined with young and old; all the women carried flowers. As we passed through the crowd we were greeted repeatedly by showers of flowers. After a while we reached Porte d'Orleans. It had been about 7:30 in the morning when we had left the French checkpoint and already the crowds along the road were thick. The people were not all from the immediate locale. Men and women on bicycles were coming down the road from Paris. Evidently word had gotten around that the long-awaited French column was approaching, and hundreds of people were driving out to meet their liberators. As our vehicles approached, these people lined up with the others to join in the cheering. Because

of the swelling crowds, the closer we got to Paris the slower was our progress.

Still the crowd grew. A few miles outside of Paris, people formed solid ranks on either side of the road.

The increase in numbers meant increase in noise. The cheers merged into a solid roar. Still the flowers showered on us. Women and girls ran out and placed flowers on the jeeps, working them into the camouflage nets and other places where they would stick. They also handed us bouquets, until soon we resembled the prize floats in the Pasadena Rose Bowl Parade on New Year's Day. Major Calvert was busily grinding his movie camera as I guided the jeep slowly on. Weeping women ran out of the cheering crowds to embrace and kiss us. Soon we were approaching the small suburbs bordering on the great French metropolis. We crossed the Versailles Road at Croix de Berny and moved up the Grande Rue and, later, the Avenue of Liberation. And, sitting proudly on the hood of my jeep as though he understood what was going on was little Alsos, our pup.

Yet as we approached the Porte d'Orleans at about 8:30 on that morning of 25 August, 1944, a roar went up that dwarfed anything we had heard previously. The masses filling the square began singing the Marseillaise. Many pointed at us and gesticulated as we entered the square, and a combined shout went up. *"Les Americains!"* The Parisians had been expecting French troops. They saw soldiers of the U.S.A.

As segment after segment of the crowd realized we were American rather than French, the roar instead of diminishing became literally deafening. Women wept and embraced us. Men slapped our backs and shouted incoherently. The women snatched the flowers from our vehicles and kissed them. I suppose many wanted souvenirs of the liberation of Paris. In seconds our vehicles were stripped down to combat appearance.

The Porte d'Orleans, or the Orleans Gate, is in fact a square formed by the intersection of two major boulevards and several smaller streets shooting off to the sides. La Place de la Porte d'Orleans is typical of the squares ringing the city. Faced by small balconies, apartment buildings with cafes and stores on the ground floors surround the square. Sounds of scattered firing could be heard coming from the streets behind them. But the people were not interested in fighting—only in the dying rule of the Nazis. They had gathered to

celebrate the return of their fighting men and of the gay life of the city.

Soon a man, obviously American, made his way to us. He beamed as he shook our hands. A downed flier, he had found that evading the enemy in Paris was not too difficult. He reported that there were no Germans in the immediate vicinity. However, a sizable force was holed up at the Luxembourg Gardens with two Tiger tanks still active. Within the city small-arms fire was constantly being exchanged between the Free French and the Pro-Nazi *miliciens*. The flier was still briefing us when a Frenchman came riding up on a motorbike and announced to the crowd that the Second French Armored Division was about to arrive. More shouts.

It seems that the mustachioed French major had sent a messenger to inform his general that an American unit had passed through the checkpoint. This was not according to plan. The French had interpreted it as meaning the Americans were double-crossing them. General Leclerc had ordered his division to move immediately on Paris. It was said later that this hurry-up run by the French advance unit was the fastest it had traveled in a long time.

Several considerations had kept me waiting at Porte d'Orleans. In the first place, we did not have enough strength to tangle in street-fighting. Secondly, I was not anxious to violate further the plan to let the French troops march in first; we were satisfied to have carried the American flag to the edge of Paris before any other Allied unit. Thirdly, I expected that the Pentagon would quarter me for going as far as I had. But certainly they would hang me outright if I actually penetrated Paris contrary to well-laid arrangements. Finally, our mission was not to liberate cities or engage in street-fighting. It was to secure Joliot-Curie.

But upon hearing that the French were approaching, I had a change of heart. My decision was to make an attempt to reach the College de France, where we might find Joliot-Curie.

After checking the route, we moved into the Rue de la Voie Verte, hoping to make our way to the Sorbonne from the southeast. Unfortunately we could not sneak off unnoticed. As the jeeps left the square, men armed with rifles, burp-guns and pistols followed us as if in support, brandishing

their weapons and shouting. We kept going for two blocks, whereupon we ran into small-arms fire from the *miliciens*. They were shooting at us from rooftops and windows. Exposed in open jeeps with only carbines and one tommy-gun for weapons, we felt unreasonably exposed. There was nothing to do but return to the Porte d'Orleans and wait for the French column.

In about fifteen minutes the forward elements of the famous French fighting division appeared. This was the excuse for the biggest and wildest ovation yet.

Disregarding the pleas of the crews, the more hysterical of the revelers climbed upon tanks and halftracks waving tricolor flags and exhorting others to more frenzied shouting. We sat in our jeeps waiting for the column to move on. Finally the French cleared their vehicles and started up the Avenue d'Orleans. We let three combat vehicles pass, then joined the column rumbling toward the center of the city.

Reaching Montparnasse Cemetery on the Boulevard Respail, the column came under heavy machine-gun and small-arms fire. Apparently this was one of the spots where the die-hard French pro-Nazis were going to put up a stiff fight. The column halted. Tanks opened up with heavy and light machine guns. We joined in the fight, taking cover behind the tanks. Tony Calvert was busy with his carbine until it jammed. He tried to get it working but failed. Throwing the gun into the jeep, he started aiming his movie camera, which he used thereafter very effectively.

The combat column looked like its old self. The civilians who had been hanging on the vehicles or riding in the halftracks, and those who had been cheering and shouting along the way, had disappeared with the first shots.

The column moved up the Boulevard Du Montparnasse and halted at the Montparnasse Railroad Station where the Allied Force CP was established. Elements of the column moved on toward the Invalides and the Seine River. I decided that it would be best for us to operate from Montparnasse, particularly since General Gerow, the U. S. Corps Commander, was expected to use this CP. About noon our small group made another effort to break through to our objective, but again we were driven back by fire from the buildings.

French troops kept pouring in but they were all bound for the center of the city. Soon Brig. Gen. Tom Betts, Deputy G-2, SHAEF, arrived. He agreed to request a small combat

unit to assist me in reaching my objective. About this time the enemy again opened fire on the troops and the railroad station. Consequently the troop commander declined General Betts's request.

It was already the middle of the afternoon and I felt that more than enough time had been wasted. The Nazis had begun to surrender. Armed citizens were bringing in larger and larger groups of prisoners. The earlier captives were mostly stunned German soldiers who could not quite understand what was happening. Then officers were giving up in bunches. The latter were mightily relieved when they reached the railroad station and were turned over to the French Army. One could not blame them. There is nothing worse for a soldier than to fall into the hands of an aroused, uncontrollable rabble. Some of the Nazis might have deserved a fate worse than death but we were not the ones to judge. I saw a column of prisoners, led by their officers, being marched to the Montparnasse Railroad Station under guard of the valiant V-day fighters. The latter constantly harassed their captives, made a big show of them. Too bad the French command did not set up a recruiting station. It would have been interesting to see how many Parisians carrying weapons that day would have been willing to don a uniform!

The constant flow of prisoners increased my urge to get to our target. I felt that the enemy was so depleted that we should be able to break through to Joliot's laboratory. After checking our arms and breaking out more ammunition, we moved away from Montparnasse under heavy covering fire. Then we backtracked down the Boulevard Du Montparnasse to Place Camille Julian, where we turned left up the Boulevard St. Michel. Within twenty or thirty yards, once again we came under heavy small-arms fire. This time the enemy was in earnest. Leonard ran across the street to the cover of a large tree. Gerry took shelter in a doorway. Tony and I crouched behind our jeep.

Such situations were not unfamiliar to Gerry, who had fought in Italy. He had faced many tricks of the retreating Germans. But to Tony Calvert and Nat Leonard, this guerilla-type street-fighting was a new experience. It was also an occasion when the French civilian fighters took positive action. The shooting soon brought a number of them to help. Before long Leonard had several men whose fire he was di-

recting and whose movements he coordinated. I shouted to Gerry that we would cover him if he could take a few of the volunteers who had joined him and work his way up the left side of the boulevard. From there he would be able to cover our advance to the next street on the right, the street into which we wanted to move.

This time Tony Calvert's carbine was in working condition and he calmly and deliberately directed his fire at windows from which snipers could appear. I did the same. Leonard used his Tommy-gun quite well, spraying the rooftops and windows around us. Gerry, in an advantageous position, shot effectively. Thanks to the efforts of Americans and French we were able to give the enemy more than he bargained for. Our little force moved into Rue Val de Grace, turning left after a couple of blocks, passing a school and a church. That gave us some unpleasant moments. Snipers favor public buildings. We got by safely and continued cautiously down Rue St. Jacques until we were stopped by some excited Frenchmen who told us that the cross-street ahead, Rue Soufflot, was under direct fire "of a German gun in the Luxembourg Gardens."

The weapon could have been a small anti-tank gun of some sort. However, we had to cross Rue Soufflot to get to the laboratory. I proposed that we start at the beginning of the block and run our jeeps abreast, crossing the intersection at a speed of forty miles an hour. The men were willing to try. As we got set for the run, the French sensed what was to take place. They became tense and looked at us encouragingly, though none made a sound. Picking up speed, we hit Rue Soufflot and sped across as a shout went up from the crowd almost simultaneously with a loud gun report. We didn't stop to determine whether the gun had fired through our path or the blast had been coincidental.

At about four in the afternoon we approached Rue des Ecoles. Just ahead loomed the buildings that housed Joliot's laboratory. As we dismounted and started for the gate of the court, we were met by sporadic rifle fire from adjacent buildings, particularly from the belfrey of a church. No one was hit and we immediately answered the fire.

When the firing had died down, a civilian came out of the building and greeted me in English. Friend or foe, he was not to be allowed to guess the strength of my outfit.

"I'm Colonel Pash. I command the American troops in this sector. I shall have to use your building as my command post. Are you in charge?"

I was told that Dr. Frederic Joliot-Curie was in charge. The civilian led me to Joliot's office—and at last I met the man responsible for my coming to Paris.

He extended his hand and said, "I am Joliot-Curie and I wish to welcome you."

"Sir, conditions of war make it necessary for me to occupy your building. But I shall see that no damage is done. I hope you will not mind the intrusion. *C'est la guerre.*"

The doctor told me he would be most pleased to have American troops occupy his laboratory. During the final days of Nazi occupation he had been concocting makeshift grenades with which the Free French attacked Nazi vehicles. This was known in Paris, where spiteful *miliciens* were still everywhere. "I am afraid for my life," Joliot added. "I shall be grateful if you can give me protection."

A better opening could not be hoped for. I frowned for a few moments, as though weighing the military requirements of the situation. Then I said, "Dr. Joliot-Curie, I think I can provide the necessary protection. We have a Private Leonard, whom I will assign as your guard. He is a former schoolteacher and a university graduate, and he speaks French fluently. Of course, to make such an assignment under our regulations, I must take you into technical custody—which means that I assume responsibility for your safety, you see. Because of this, I shall have to ask you not to go anywhere without Leonard or leave the building."

He consented readily. We walked toward the entrance of the building where we saw the assistant, very pale, coming toward us and in an agitated voice trying to convince Gerry that "votre colonel" was all right. Gerry's grim expression and his .45 pressed to the man's ribs explained why said assistant was upset. Gerry had been worried for my safety because I had been gone so long.

Seeing me, Gerry holstered the gun and relaxed. To the assistant he said. "Sorry, musiew. No hard feelings." His disarming grin still worked. The assistant laughed. "I am glad no more hard feelings of gun, yes?"

"Wait till my buddy hears about this," commented Gerry. "Lightning-A struck Paris. That's us!"

I was feeling pretty glad myself. Lightning-A, as Gerry had christened our outfit, had successfully completed its mission in Paris just a few hours after liberation. Joliot-Curie, the top French nuclear physicist, was in our hands.

CHAPTER VIII

Scientists Are Human

Contact with the eminent Joliot-Curie and occupation of his laboratory began a new phase of Alsos activities. That phase, among other things, was to confirm what I had been suspecting for some time. Despite everything heard in Washington, scientists are actually human.

Introducing Nat Leonard, I jokingly said, "This young man is your jailer, Doctor."

"Ah," replied Joliot-Curie. "For the past several years I have been free to come and go. But I'm sure I did not enjoy it as much as I shall enjoy being in jail in my own office."

I mobilized five of the Free French into our garrison for guard duty. Placing them under Gerry, I also gave him Joliot-Curie's assistant as interpreter. Then I walked back into the building, followed by Joliot, Tony and Nat. The rather modern, two-story structure contained the laboratories, a conference room and offices, in some of which cots were set up. Joliot offered me the use of his office, which I appreciated. The rest of our crew were also well taken care of. Joliot-Curie assured us that his students, who had taken refuge in the building, would be glad to cook our evening meal.

I hastily explained that there would only be the four of us, since my detachment, under the command of my deputy, was continuing its operations in nearby streets. Gerry was to provide the students with our rations. "Ask them to join us for supper, Gerry," I instructed, "and you take charge of the KP's."

Little did I suspect the favor I was doing him. That evening, as we walked into a chemistry laboratory that doubled as kitchen and dining room, we found Gerry, in high spirits, directing his KP unit—five attractive French girls!

That was our first real glimpse of *Mademoiselle de Paree*. All of us had the same favorable reaction. The girls had fancy hairdos, wore summer blouses of light printed cloth and flowing skirts of contrasting colors. Vivacious creatures, they appeared to enjoy the situation as much as we did.

The laboratory was arranged with chairs and a table at one end. From that "dining room" we could look into the "kitchen," the likes of which I had never seen. Beakers and retorts of all sizes and shapes were suspended over Bunsen burners and spirit lamps in the approved laboratory fashion, and were being used to cook food and boil the water for coffee. The latter, provided by us, was the part of the meal anxiously awaited by our hosts and hostesses. One would have judged that the young ladies were entirely helpless, for they called constantly to "Monsieur Zherry" to "please 'elp me weet dees," or " 'oold dees for me." As far as Gerry was concerned—well, I never saw a more obliging man in the kitchen.

The enjoyable and quite elaborate meal assumed the aspects of a celebration after we made use of the two bottles of champagne given us at Paimpol. It was a revelation to watch an outstanding French scientist enjoying himself like us common mortals.

With developments progressing so well, there was no need immediately to press our other assignments. They could be approached gradually.

Tony and I sat up late with Joliot, discussing his experiences under the Nazis and feeling him out with regard to his work during that time. We sought to learn if any Nazi scientists had used his laboratory and whether they might have left any documents. In turn, we gave him some news regarding Allied scientists in whom he might have an interest. My parting comment was that some of the American scientists we had mentioned might be in England.

The next morning was rather uneventful for we made every effort to remain unnoticed. Tony Calvert poked around, doing some sleuthing. We could hear sporadic fire crackling in various parts of the city. After lunch—prepared and shared by our charming KP's—Tony and I were sitting with Joliot-Curie in his office. His assistant entered and announced that an American captain and a few soldiers were outside.

At that moment the captain walked in without waiting for an invitation. He was surprised to see us with Joliot-Curie. In a very formal tone he notified me that my men and I must leave since he had orders to take over this installation. Immediately I sensed a repetition of Rome and the Amaldi case. I led the captain to an adjoining office.

It was the Rome farce again, all right. Except that this time I dismissed the officer less harshly. That was because I learned he had been a student of mine at Hollywood High School, where I had taught until 1940.

Rejoining Joliot-Curie, I told him that a silly mistake had been made and that the captain had gone. After Joliot left the room I turned to Calvert. "Well, Tony, the OSS is in town and probably some of the other high-powered outfits. We'd better contact T-Force and check on billets before the best are taken. We should go and take care of ourselves. Furthermore, a report should be sent to London."

Later we pursued the matter of London, a topic selected for the benefit of Joliot-Curie. Again Tony and I mentioned the American scientists who were there. He overheard this, as we intended, and he remarked that nothing would please him more than to get to London where he could see some of his old friends. He also expressed the thought that it might be safer for him to leave Paris for a few days.

"It might be arranged, if that's what you wish," I said.

"Really, Colonel?"

What he didn't know was that we already had a flight set up to take him to London as soon as he could be maneuvered into requesting such a trip. "Matter of fact, sir, I was about to fly two officers to London. But in view of your desire, and because it would relieve me from the burden of worrying about you for the next few days, I would be pleased to have you replace one officer—provided you will not tell anyone about the flight."

I heard later that Joliot-Curie, told in London that all had been a trick, questioned my gentlemanly qualities. Our paths crossed on two other occasions during the war but I gathered that his opinion of me did not change except that it grew progressively more uncomplimentary. Toward the end of the war, after receiving reports of the terms he used to express his lack of esteem for me, I marveled at the rapidity with which Europeans pick up some of our saltier GI expressions.

Gerry had been sent out to locate the T-Force. He returned with the news that it had set up for business in the Petit Palais at the corner of Champs Elysees and Avenue Alexandre III.

It was now essential that we prepare for the arrival of our main contingent. This we tried to do although the Petit Palais was a center of confusion.

The presence of American troops drew mobs of Parisians to the area. There were, of course, a few looking for profit, for ways to take advantage of the new foreigners. But in the main it was a cordial and friendly crowd.

Two days after the liberation, one could not detect from the appearance of the Parisians that they had just endured the four-year yoke of Nazi Occupation. Gaiety ruled everywhere during these sunny days of late August. I remember the golden-red leaves on the trees, the aroma of roasting chestnuts. But most of all I remember the thousands of pretty girls on bicycles, riding along the Champs.

Of course, men jockeyed bicycles, too, but the great majority of the riders were those French girls whose billowing skirts, flashing knees and gay smiles had our men blissfully blind to other traffic. The girls were not unconscious of the effect they created; they blushed, tossed their heads, smiled.

One could feel their warm good-will toward the French and American troops, their happiness at being liberated from a fate which perhaps they had accepted but which they had detested. There was feverish activity everywhere to clear away barricades and carcasses of dead war-machines. Smiling young ladies and friendly Frenchmen stopped us to chat, to tell us how pleased they were to see Americans. Invariably they invited us for a drink, usually to their homes or a sidewalk cafe.

On the morning of 27 August, still somewhat befogged by all the celebrating but rested by a sound sleep, I reported to T-Force headquarters and received a shock more disturbing than a bomb blast. A radio message from ETOUSA Forward at Valognes requested the American commander in Paris to arrest and hold one Samuel Goudsmit of The Alsos Mission, for absconding with a government vehicle. Our chief longhair, one of America's internationally known scientists, sets his foot on European soil and immediately becomes the target of the military police!

After I had cooled off a little I saw the humor of the situation.

I laughed. This scientist was not only human; he was out to prove it! Something had to be done. If only I could see Sam before the MP's got to him, maybe the matter could be cleared up. I told my men of the situation and informed them that Sam Goudsmit was now Alsos' target in Paris.

Our efforts led to nothing. Nobody had any idea where Sam was. I contacted all the places where he was likely to report and asked the senior officers to keep him on ice if he did show up.

Sure enough, Sam meandered into Paris a few hours later. He was somewhat surprised by the eager reception given him. "I guess we can settle down to business right away," he said.

"Sam, business might be somewhat confining. Can you guide our scientific operations from a cell block?"

"What are you talking about, Boris? Oh, I know . . . I'm charged with stealing a government vehicle, right?"

Sam hastened to explain. He had flown to Valognes from London and had reported to the G-2, ETOUSA Forward. There he had asked for a car to take him to Paris. Told that no car was available, he had requested transportation to get him around the sprawling, scattered headquarters. When the driver of a C&R reported in, Colonel Ford had told him he would drive for Dr. Goudsmit. "Take the doctor anywhere he wants to go," the G-2 had said. After leaving the G-2 office, Sam had called at another staff section, but the gray matter in that scientific head was churning. The driver had not batted an eye when Sam had told him to take the road to Paris. The fellow had been told to "take the doctor anywhere he wanted to go." For a pure scientist, inexperienced in military field operations, Sam had done some very practical and not so pure scheming. As a matter of fact, a prosecuting attorney would have sound grounds to prosecute for premeditated theft. Sam had obtained rations before departing from the headquarters area, and had had the driver requisition extra gas. He also had liberated a map. These foresighted arrangements had made it unnecessary to call on units en route for food or gas, thus circumventing an all-points pick-up alert. Sam's story convinced me that if all scientists were like him, we would have a bunch of regular fellows in our scientific group.

With the arrival of Captain Blake, Lieutenant Augustine

and Agents Carl Fiebig and Nick Dolida, our operational unit was assembled and ready for further action. The scientists now on hand included Doctors Wallace E. Brode, Clarence N. Hickman, William Noyes, Hans H. Reese, T. K. Sherwood—and, of course, Sam himself. Our military expert consultants were Colonels. Martin B. Chittick, CWS, and Emerick Kutschko, GSC; Lt. Colonels E.V. Foran, QMC R. H. Ranger, SC; and Capt. William J. Cromartie, MC. The Navy, too, had added to its Alsos personnel, and the group under Captain Schade joined us in Paris. Included were Capt. Wendel F. Roop and Commanders A. L. Mumma and J. P. Den Hartog. Of our operational group, only George Eckman and Private Louis Lolli had remained in London in order to keep in touch with the Combined Intelligence Objectives Subcommittee coordinating the activities of the various intelligence teams on the Continent.

Our large group of specialists were anxious to start looking into the activities in Paris of the Nazi scientific war machine. The Alsos office at 2 Place de l'Opera quickly became a beehive of activity. Preliminary intelligence was rather limited. Very little information of value relating to scientific targets had been received from other intelligence organizations. Just a few months later Sam Goudsmit, in commenting to Washington on one of our important operations, stated that "original target information obtained through MIS, OSS and from CIOS was practically nil." With that void in intelligence, it was imperative that some meaningful information be gathered and Paris was a good place to start.

The Allied armies were slowly pushing forward. The British and the Canadians were driving the Germans through Belgium. On 5 September word reached us of the expected entry by the British into Brussels. That was the precise time when a radio message from Washington disrupted our pleasant life in Paris. A refining plant of Union Miniere Du Haut-Katanga, the prime supplier of uranium ore, was located near Oolen, a small community on the Albert Canal northwest of Brussels. The parent organization main office, the Societe Generale Metallurgique de Hoboken, was in Antwerp. Our new mission: get to Belgium without delay, determine where any stocks of refined uranium ore are located and in what amount, and seize any available supplies.

That message had a special impact on Sam Goudsmit. The Allies were getting closer to Holland, his native country. He helped our military men plan the foray. It was decided that a small, highly mobile group would make the dash—the accepted Alsos pattern. Brussels and Antwerp would be reconnoitered and on-the-spot plans developed for subsequent activities. Again it was necessary to call on our godfather, Col. Bryan Conrad, whose advance headquarters had moved to Paris a few days before.

My visit to Conrad on the early morning of 6 September brought home to me the fact that Alsos would be operating in different commands. In each case, special arrangements would have to be made. In this case we were to move into the area of the British 21st Army Group. An American unit free-wheeling among the British could not remain unnoticed very long. And the man through whom we would have to clear was the Britisher, Kenneth Strong, who had received evasive answers from me when I had gone through Algiers a few months earlier. This same general officer was the Allied Chief of Intelligence in Europe, having moved in with General Eisenhower. That could present a difficult problem because Washington had reaffirmed its instructions not to reveal my mission to the British.

Informed of my plan, Conrad said he would make immediate contact with Brigadier Williams, Intelligence Chief of the British 21st Army Group. However, Conrad had difficulty establishing contact with Amiens, where the 21st Group headquarters had been last reported. Conrad's staff informed him that the advancing British forces were expected to enter Brussels that morning.

"You can't waste time, Boris," Colonel Conrad said. "But if you get up there among the British, you'll find yourself in a mess." As he was saying this, he pressed the buzzer on his desk. "When do you plan to leave?" He asked.

"My men are standing by ready to move, Bryan."

"The only way to handle this is for me to ride to Amiens with you and talk to Williams." He turned to his administrative officer, Major Gerber, who had just walked in.

"I'm going into the field with Colonel Pash. Get hold of Williams at 21st British and tell him I'm on my way to his headquarters."

He then picked up the phone and told the Chief of Staff that urgent War Department business required him to leave

immediately, and that his administrative officer would provide the details. What the latter would tell the Chief of Staff, I couldn't imagine. Poor Gerber had not been read into our picture. But Colonel Conrad put on his helmet, holstered his .45, and led the way from his office. You can understand why we were fond of him.

So it was that shortly after seven A.M. an Alsos group consisting of Colonel Conrad, Reg Augustine, Carl Fiebig, Gerry Beatson, Nick Dolida and myself pulled away from the headquarters building.

CHAPTER IX

Lightning-A Strikes in the North

The jeeps rolled north through the Porte de Clinchy to St. Denis. From there we headed for Amiens by way of Chantilly.

As we entered a wooden area about twenty miles north of Paris, armed Germans suddenly appeared from the underbrush on both sides of the road. We did not wait to find out if they had any fight in them—in a split second we had them covered. Colonel Conrad made a waving motion as though signalling to someone behind us. The Germans immediately raised their hands. We pointed toward Chantilly and directed them to turn themselves in to the local authorities.

Apparently this area had undergone severe mine and demolition activity, because the roads were badly damaged and almost every culvert and small bridge had been blown up. Nevertheless, we managed to reach Creil on the Oise River.

There we had no choice but to turn toward Beaumont. Near it we located a farmer operating a raft. With the help of his raft and our cigarettes, we moved the jeeps across the Oise and arrived at Amiens about midday. In the flat open country we were not bothered further by surrendering Germans. Having no place to hide, they had cleared out.

The headquarters of the 21st Army Group had moved out of Amiens and questions as to its new location brought conflicting answers. I told Colonel Conrad that we intended to go on to Brussels. "I'd better go with you and make the contact with the British commander."

Our men were prepared for life in the field under all conditions, but not Bryan Conrad. He had left his office with only a pistol and a couple of extra clips. He didn't even have a toothbrush or a towel. But that did not deter him. He was delighted to be away from his desk and in the field.

The ravages of war became still more striking as we moved through the industrial country of Northern France. We saw factories destroyed by bombing, railroad yards full of torn rails, bridges resting on river bottoms, roads full of bomb craters and pockmarked by explosions of anti-tank mines. A depressing picture, made more so by the apathy of the civilian population.

After another ten miles we reached the border and entered the Belgian town of Quievrain. The destruction was there but the apathy was gone. Farmers and townsfolk were out with shovels trying to fill the holes in the road to make it easier for Allied vehicles to roll along. At Mons, also a large rail center, the mettle of the Belgians was even more evident. The Germans had been chased out of Mons only a few hours before but the Belgians were already cleaning up their marshaling yards, dragging the crushed giants of the railroad to the scrap heap, clearing the twisted rails, laying new ones so that trains could start running again. The people accepted liberation as a signal to commence feverish reconstruction and warmly support the advancing Allied armies.

About ten miles south of Brussels we were stopped by agitated townsfolk. They explained that a concentration of Nazi troops were reported in a wooded area to the east of the highway just north of Hal. They had been ambushing Allied vehicles, we were told. I asked Bryan Conrad if he cared to suggest what we should do.

"I know you fellows want to get through. I'm with you. Let's go!"

He then drew his .45, checked the clip, and placed the weapon in the open dashboard compartment where it would be handy.

But we passed Hal without incident. Maybe the Nazis feared to attack in broad daylight.

We entered Brussels late that afternoon amid a tumultuous celebration resembling the New Orleans Mardi Gras. Everyone was exuberant. After reaching the Boulevard Anspach, we had to park our jeeps and proceed on foot to the British commandant's office.

Augustine was already arranging for billets when Conrad and I learned that the 21st Army Group Headquarters was not in Brussels. We contacted Colonel Strangeways, commanding the British R-Force that corresponded to the American T-Force. The rest of my crew—three personable young men—were helping the Belgians keep up their festivities.

Bryan Conrad told Strangeways that we were on an important classified mission and had to get to Antwerp without delay. Colonel Strangeways explained that the advance British elements had entered Antwerp, but the situation between Brussels and the port city was still uncertain. He promised to detach two Recces from a Royal Air Force Armored Squadron to accompany our group, thus providing additional fire power. Conrad, however, decided to spend the night in Brussels and return to Paris the next morning. He would have continued with us had he been able to come up with the slightest excuse for doing so. I was thankful for what he already had done.

The celebration in the Brussels streets was still going strong at five in the morning when Reg Augustine, Carl Fiebig, Gerry Beatson and I quietly rendezvoused with the British Recces.

No trouble developed while we covered the thirty miles between Brussels and Antwerp. The wide highway was in perfect condition and we met no opposition. We rolled into the city at about 8:30 on the morning of 7 September.

There was no celebration in Antwerp and the streets were deserted. The Germans still held the northern half of the city. Fighting was in progress. It was a little premature to contact anyone connected with Union Miniere de Haut-Katanga. Furthermore, Colonel Conrad had asked me to obtain plans of the Antwerp port and all possible information regarding the condition in which the Germans had left the port and its equipment. He also wanted data on its capacity to handle cargo.

As we neared the port area, British Tommies were everywhere but moving cautiously. A few light field and anti-tank guns were in firing position, pointing north across one of the channels. Rifle fire and an occasional gun blast in the northwest section of the city were distinctly audible. What we could see of the port appeared in good shape. There was no evidence of major destruction. I told Carl, however, that it might be difficult to get a worthwhile assessment of the port's capabilities. "Colonel Conrad needs it though. Antwerp is to be the main supply port for the Allied Forces in Europe. It's vital that our planners have information without delay."

Much to my surprise, we found a large staff busily at work in the port administration building. We were shown to the office of the Port Director, who spoke English fluently. I in-

formed him of my needs. Without hesitation, and obviously pleased to be able to assist the war effort, he replied that he had been expecting such a request. At that very moment his people were gathering information about the port's condition. He picked up the telephone and carried on a long conversation. While he talked, I looked out of the office window across the broad channel.

His phone conversation finished, the Director said, "I was talking to an assistant in charge of the northern section of the port. It is still in enemy hands. But my assistant says the Nazi soldiers there are getting ready to leave. There is only minor damage. Our employees will try to prevent any demolition attempts. I will have a complete report ready for you tomorrow morning."

The Director turned over to me the plans of the port, along with an assessment of its current storage and traffic capacity and details of its operational procedures. Colonel Conrad was understandably pleased when the information was delivered to him. While such work was not a normal part of our mission, we supported the field commanders whenever possible. Because of our unorthodox methods, often we were unable to accomplish assignments faster than could conventional intelligence groups.

While we had been busy with the port survey, Reg Augustine had visited the offices of the Societe Generale Metalurgique de Hoboken. He had arranged appointments for the morning of the eighth.

After checking in at a modern and well-operated hotel, we decided to visit the zoo where, we were told, the Belgians were locking up captured collaborators. What we saw was beyond all expectations. The zoo animals had long since been destroyed or eaten. The cages were now occupied by haggard and wild-looking people accused of being Belgian Quislings. It was a revolting sight. Most of the prisoners had been thrown into the cages on the strength of suspicion or somebody's denunciation. Many of them may have been guilty yet I could not but feel that among them were innocent people denounced because of personal grudges or for spite. From my experiences during the upheavals in Russia in 1918-20, I knew that such things happened.

We walked into the lion house where the cages surrounded a central open space. In each cage were from six to twelve persons, men and women. Some looked defiantly at their tor-

mentors, but most had the appearance of frightened, cornered beasts. Men and women moved up to the bars to spit at the "animals" and shout insults. Some poked canes or sticks into the cages, trying to jab the prisoners. There was nothing one could do to alleviate the situation since it appeared to be in the hands of a few nondescript men with tommy-guns slung over their necks or pistols tucked into their belts. It was disgustingly evident that these "partisans," like their French counterparts, came out for the victory parades and to "fight" when the fighting had already been done by real men.

That evening a few German shells fell near the hotel. On two occasions the management ordered all guests into the underground theater that served as a bomb shelter. We did not allow this to interfere with our sleep or our planning. The town of Oolen, near which the uranium refinery was located, lay on the Albert Canal about twenty-eight miles east of Antwerp. Reg Augustine was able to determine that fighting was still in progress along the canal. But a thorough reconnaissance of the area and the plant was a necessity. The full support of Colonel Strangeways being assured, we could plan our moves with confidence.

At the office of the Union Miniere, Reg finally came up with some specific information about the uranium.

The Nazis had evacuated more than 1,000 tons of the refined product to Germany. Close to 150 tons had been last reported at the Oolen plant and might now be in the process of evacuation ahead of the oncoming Allied war machine.

We lit out for Oolen in the two jeeps. At a crossroads we were suddenly and vigorously waved down by some British soldiers concealed behind a stone house. They were the crew of an anti-tank gun stationed slightly ahead and pointing in the direction of our travel. They signaled frantically to us to take cover. This we did without delay, running the jeeps off the road and behind the house. These Tommies were the forward element of a battalion covering a bridge over the canal. Another few yards would have brought us into the sights of German guns.

Fortunately the crossroads allowed us an alternate route. Realizing that the enemy might be anywhere, we became more cautious. Sticking to small side roads, we finally reached Oolen from the south.

The typical Belgian village was clean but deserted. Working our way carefully to the red-brick railroad station, we

found a British Guard unit there under the command of a captain—all very tall and all wearing berets. They brought to mind the merry men of Sherwood Forest.

MAIN HEADQUARTERS,
21 ARMY GROUP.

18 Sep, 44.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Col. B.T. PASH and Major R.R. FURMAN are on a mission on behalf of the Supreme Commander. They should be given every facility.

E.L. Bissell

BGS(I).

The captain had a detailed map of the area, enabling us to pinpoint the plant to be investigated. It was one of four standing together on the canal, with high brick walls on three sides. The fourth side, open, was now exposed to the Germans. According to the British captain, the factories were in "no man's land"—occupied by neither side. Patrols of both sides were making raids through the area. The captain objected when told we were going in. He claimed it would be too dangerous. But my SHAEF credential did the trick. The captain promised to provide cover in case of trouble.

To get to our objective, the farthest of the plants, we had to traverse areas covered by German guns. The British had marked the extent of the lateral range of those guns with white tape, indicating the corridors down which the Germans could pour lead. One of the lanes was narrow; the other was about forty-five feet wide. We had to cross both.

The British captain told us that the Germans had tried to cross the canal the day before and had been beaten off. He suggested that warning shots be fired at the first indication that the Germans again might be attempting to cross. He would then try to send a detachment to get us out of trouble.

I positioned the jeeps about sixty yards from the raised railroad crossing. When everyone was set and each man had a good grip on some solid part of the jeep, Gerry and Carl got the signal to go ahead. They made two fast shifts while gunning the vehicles, and we hit the crossing at better than fifty miles an hour. Sailing through the air like water-skiers at Cypress Gardens, we came down on all four wheels in a perfect four-point landing that failed to slow us down. We were out of range of the German guns in less time than it takes to describe our ride, and well ahead of the short bursts from small arms. I lost my grip on the jeep, however, and came down with a thud. My steel helmet was all that prevented my spine from coming out through the top of my head.

In the factory compound we were astonished to find several employees. One warned us to use the buildings for cover because the area was open to view from the opposite side of the canal. We backed the jeep against a wall, facing the gate so that if necessary we could pull out swiftly.

The plant manager came out to meet us. Gerry and Carl took positions on the canal side just in case the enemy should become serious. The two were to open fire if the Germans as much as got their feet wet. Reg and I accompanied the manager into the building. We told him that we had checked with his office in Antwerp and were on orders to inspect the plants in the area. He was to make available to Reg Augustine any information or documents we might require.

I went out to look at the warehouses. Just then the quiet was broken by the whizzing and whining of mortar projectiles, followed by explosions. I dived behind a stack of filled sacks close by. Carl's position was not too far from my cover. He shouted that he and Gerry were all right but "ready and willing to leave" any time I considered the job done. Meanwhile, the Tommies were going into action on either side of us and the German fire soon died down.

The fireworks outside had not stopped Reg Augustine. The records he turned up revealed that about 70 tons of the refined uranium ore remained at the plant, that the Germans had removed some 1,000 tons, and that the Belgians on 4

June, 1940, had shipped more than 80 tons to France just ahead of the Nazi invader. About the latter consignment we uncovered detailed information, as follows:

SHIPMENT 4 JUNE, 1940

Car No.	No. Barrels	Kilograms
138561	26	9,867
239537	26	9,867
169092	31	11,765
132895	23	8,728
210644	28	10,626
62950	26	9,867
63052	29	11,005

While the manager was quite cooperative, Reg could not determine the exact destination of the shipment. He did learn it had been made through Antwerp.

Nothing could be gained by lingering at Oolen. I gave the order to return to Paris.

That very day Sam Goudsmit arrived in Brussels to start investigations. But there was so much to be done that I considered it essential to do some organizing in Paris rather than join Sam immediately. A more substantial group was needed if explorations were to be continued in Belgium and, at the same time, a search for the missing shipment made in France.

The next few days in Paris, I continued to play things by ear. My coded report to Washington provoked repeated exhortations to locate the lost eighty tons of uranium. But searching for freight cars that had been somewhere in France four years before was not that easy, especially since half of France was not yet under complete Allied control.

So Alsos at the moment was supposed to mount an operation to secretly remove the uranium stocks from Belgium, to hit our Eindhoven targets when that city should fall into Allied hands, and to undertake a thorough reconnaissance of northern and southern France, the latter still under confused German and Free French control, in search of elusive freight cars. In addition, we had to supply adequate support for our scientific group at all times. The combined tasks seemed insurmountable, considering the small operational force under my command. On 15 September, 1944, this force consisted

of four officers, three CIC agents and two NCO's. The scientific group consisted of eleven civilians and twelve military scientists. Of the latter, six were from the Army and six represented the attached Navy Technical Mission under the command of Schade, now a commodore. It was fortunate that among the technical personnel in uniform there were men like Captain Roop and Al Mumma of the Navy, and Martin Chittick, Ed Foran and Bill Cromartie of the Army, who were equally efficient in technical fields and in soldiering. Packy Schade, particularly, time after time resolved difficult situations.

Our scientists in Paris were busily engaged in running down leads. They checked laboratories, interviewed French and captured German scientists, studied documents. It was interesting to watch them work. They got a big kick out of their cloak-and-dagger activities, once again revealing themselves to us military guys as human, maybe all too human. But make no mistake, enormous credit is due American scientists like these. Despite their much-publicized individualism—or perhaps because of it—they did a tremendous intelligence job in World War II.

Probably one of our most important finds during those early September days in Paris was the 1944 catalogue of Strasbourg University. Our scientists studied that publication as if it were a spicy French novel—with photographs. In the anxiety to read and analyze every detail of such documents, even meals were forgotten. The catalogue not only indicated that some of our most important personality targets were in Strasbourg, but also gave some account of their activities.

Thanks to a French engineer, we learned of a building formerly occupied by a German technical intelligence group. All furniture had been removed, but our scientists went through the place like skilled operatives. As a result, valuable information was garnered from desk pads, lists of visitors kept by the doorman, messages and phone numbers found at the switchboard, clues found in the trash.

In the loot were (1) scraps of carbon paper from which we obtained the names and addresses of French employees of the German intelligence group (2) desk calendars and pads from which leads in Holland were developed (3) hotel bills and discarded mail which eventually led to the capture of our first enemy scientist, and (4) streetcar tickets, torn sheets and

various discarded written or printed matter through which important miscellaneous intelligence was developed.

Sam returned from Brussels, where he had checked out various leads on the uranium. He brought back disturbing news. All the groups associated with the Combined Intelligence Objective Subcommittee were sending representatives to Brussels in anticipation of the fall of Eindhoven. That city was the site of the Philips Works, a high-priority target for all Allied technical intelligence. Only by getting there before all the trampling feet obliterated available clues could we uncover anything worthwhile.

Because the Germans were being pushed back steadily, our high command was getting more and more concerned over the possibility that in desperation they would come up with an A-bomb. With the brass pressuring me, I cabled George to remove our London office to Paris on 20 September. And I hastened to inform General Smith of our progress. it was through him that clearance would have to be obtained for further operations in the British-held area.

At the Trianon Hotel in Versailles, a pleasant WAC captain was guarding the door to his office. Several general officers were waiting in the reception room.

"How do you do, Captain? I'm Colonel Pash and I would like to see General Smith."

"So would these generals," replied the captain. "And there are others, way ahead of you, waiting for a phone call from me."

"Maybe my business is more important."

The captain remained polite. "Colonel, generals wait patiently to see General Smith. I should think that you could follow suit."

My time was short. "I'm under orders to see General Smith," I said placatingly. "I know he's busy. But, if you will, please let him know I'm here. When you come out and tell me that he can't see me, I'll be able to leave knowing that my orders were carried out."

She left her desk and with stiff back marched into Smith's office. In thirty seconds she returned. As she passed me and without turning her head in my direction, she said in an astounded voice, "He asks that you go in immediately."

That captain, later a major, was to get used to seeing me around and became very helpful at handling my messages.

General Smith was pleased to hear of our progress in running down the uranium. As always, he listened intently, asked pointed questions that acquainted him with all important details of our operations and plans. It was surprising how closely he followed our activities in spite of his many responsibilities.

Having been informed that seventy tons of ore would be found on the Albert Canal, General Smith told General Strong, his G-2, to contact the 21st Army Group and urge the British commander to give me every support.

General Strong's message, highly classified, was sent on 17 September to Brigadier Williams. It stated that my group acting under the Joint Chiefs of Staff in behalf of the American and British Governments, would report to Williams on 18 September, and that my mission required me to seize some materials of extreme importance to the war effort. Brigadier Williams was to arrange for transport of the materials to the United Kingdom. If requested by me, personnel to guard the material while en route was to be made available. General Strong informed Williams that no interference with the operation would be tolerated, and requested him to confirm receipt of the message. That was a powerful directive.

But my immediate concern was the tactical situation. The Germans were putting up resistance along the Albert Canal, and anything could happen. If successful in recrossing, they might learn of our interest in the refining plant and either destroy or remove materials stockpiled there. To fortify my position and avoid explanations along the various command levels, Captain Keith prepared a letter for General Strong's signature. To be carried by me, the letter read as follows:

SUPREME HEADQUARTERS
ALLIED EXPEDITIONARY FORCE
Office of Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2

Lt. Colonel Boris T. Pash, 0275706, Inf., and Major Robert F. Furman, 0350667, CE, are engaged in highly secret work for the Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force. It is requested that all to whom they apply for assistance give them access to necessary facilities and such aid as is possible.

K. W. D. Strong
K. W. D. Strong,
Major General,
A.C. of S., G-2.

With our activities in France being expanded and accelerated, it became necessary for me to split my small operational force. This was made possible by General Strong's action in assuring me full support from the 21st Army Group. I decided to take along only Gerry Beatson and Carl Fiebig. Bob Blake, Reg Augustine, Nat Leonard and Nick Dolida were to remain in Paris to support our scientists in the area, and to provide for a scientific team to get to Brussels.

There was also the matter of Strasbourg and the Philips plant, now our top target. Fortunately, even though I cannot carry a tune, playing operations by ear thus far had been successful. But I could not take chances with so important an objective as Strasbourg. I designated Bob Blake as operations officer for the Strasbourg project.

Those few days in Paris had been busy ones. Yet we had noted, and taken advantage of, the further changes since liberation. The Parisians were rapidly returning to their gay, carefree life, spending many lazy but pleasant hours in the sidewalk cafes. The American soldier was fast picking up this habit and enjoying it, and we of Alsos were far from immune. But with Eindhoven ripe to fall in the next day or two, to remain in Paris was out of the question.

CHAPTER X

Our Eagles Deliver

At four in the morning of 18 September, our small party moved out. This time the 190 miles to Brussels were covered without incident in a little more than four hours.

We checked in with 21st Army Group Headquarters, where I had a long talk with Brigadier Williams. No selling job was necessary. General Strong's message had been received, and the Brigadier handed me a note in which he urged all commanders to assist me. I had one anxious question to ask. "What about Eindhoven?"

"Your chaps dropped there yesterday," he replied. "They're having a jolly rough time of it."

"Well, I have to get in. When do you think that can be?"

"We're sending an armored corps to your airborne chaps. Two other corps are to follow up. If they're successful, you can make it . . . I'll let you know when."

This alert and friendly young brigadier, who before the war had been on the faculty at Oxford, had already alerted the commander of the British R-Force about our mission. Also, Williams promised that a British unit would be made available through Colonel Strangeways to help confiscate and guard the material we were after.

At the close of our conversation, Williams handed me a cable from Washington which stated that Bob Furman was on the way to meet us. Carl Fiebig and Gerry Beatson were already making arrangements at the Palace Hotel for the arrival of our scientific group.

Later that day we met Bob Furman at the British headquarters. With him was a British official, David Gattiker, who was to assist with the uranium operation.

We filled in Gattiker and Furman on our program. We would move to Oolen the next morning, Furman going with

us, while Gattiker remained in Brussels. We would obtain samples of the suspected material and bring them to Brussels. Arrangements were made for Gattiker to use the laboratory of the 8th General Hospital (British) to test the samples.

Early on 19 September we made our run to the Oolen plant. Again we had to make the dash across that raised railroad crossing. As our jeep picked up speed Fiebig yelled to Bob Furman, "Hang on!" Despite the warning, the latter nearly flew out of the jeep. He was annoyed. He thought the incident typical of the wild methods for which Alsos was becoming notorious; stories already were circulating in Washington and London. But I considered it more advisable for someone from Washington to be subjected to a bump on the rear end than shrapnel in the head. If Bob imagined our haste uncalled for, that illusion was quickly shattered. As we cleared the crossing and pointed the jeep at the warehoues, the Germans across the canal opened up with their mortars.

Gerry and Carl took cover behind some cargo. I leaped into the doorway of a bomb shelter. Bob Furman flattened himself against a building in sight of two Belgian women and a man who were standing with me. They looked at my field uniform and asked, "Are you American?"

"Yes."

The German mortar fire gradually died down and we went to work, selecting barrels from which samples were taken. We made a quick run to Brussels to deliver them to Gattiker. Next day we returned to Oolen ready to take care of the first phase of our mission—to remove the uranium ore stored at the plant.

We were made aware of the fact that the Germans still had not pulled back. When we exposed ourselves, the whine of bullets and the crack of rifles from across the canal greeted us. It was good to see the businesslike way in which Bob Furman, Gerry Beatson and Carl Fiebig went about their assignments, disregarding the danger, kidding each other when they had to duck but calling warnings when one thought the other was being careless.

Despite the unwelcome interruptions by the Germans, we were able to complete a detailed survey of the plant, determining where the uranium ore was stored down to the last ounce and planning for its removal. At that particular time we could not be sure that the Germans would not retake the area. Though the British armor was linking up with our 101st

Airborne at Eindhoven, the situation was touch-and-go and the opposite bank of the canal was not yet secured. I was making my plans on the assumption of having to remove the material in the face of a possible German attack.

Uranium ore is exceptionally heavy, hence had been packed in small barrels. They were stored in a warehouse facing the canal and adjoining an open shed. Although the Germans could take pot shots at us whenever they wished, we took care to be seen checking areas of no significance to us in order to conceal our real interest. Luckily the Germans must have had their second team of snipers on the line. They came close but not close enough.

The U. S. 101st Airborne Division had dropped into the Eindhoven area on 17 September. The drop had been made north of the city and the men had fought their way south, occupying Eindhoven after bitter fighting. The British armored ground column had pushed its way north from Hasselt, Holland, along Highway 15 through Hechtel, establishing a narrow corridor. But they were encountering stiff resistance. Their contact with the "Eagle" paratroopers of Gen. Maxwell Taylor was uncertain because vicious Nazi counterattacks had cut through the ground column on several occasions. The airborne drops by our 82nd and the British 1st Airborne Division did not achieve their objectives. The Germans were pressing our Eagles from all sides.

Back in Brussels, Brigadier Williams told me that the corridor to Eindhoven had been re-established that day but how long it would remain open was uncertain. Actually the British High Command was not too sure that Eindhoven could be held. Williams suggested that we get to Eindhoven while the corridor was open.

I returned to the hotel to prepare for the move. Carl Fiebig and Gerry Beatson were to accompany me. Furman would remain in Brussels. Our departure was set for three in the morning because we had some 85 miles to travel and it would be a difficult trip. Bob Furman was to keep in touch with Brigadier Williams because, as I commented, "The situation is abnormal." Carl remarked, "For us, Colonel, that makes it normal."

That trip on 21 September was difficult, all right. We were traveling south of the Albert Canal and parallel to it, and fe-

verish activity clogged all roads. British traffic was not as well regulated as our own. The withdrawal of the Germans had badly overtaxed the road surfaces, leaving them unsuitable to carry the concentration of combat units, with an emphasis on armor, into the funnel and up Highway 15 in the direction of Eindhoven. We were caught in this stream. Toward the middle of the morning, as we moved up the highway in the company of an armored unit, the Germans made another strong attempt to cut the Allied corridor north of Hechtel. Fortunately for us, we arrived twenty minutes after the engagement had ended. The British commander was reluctant to let us go on but again my credentials prevailed.

Along the road there was every evidence that the Nazis were playing for keeps in their efforts to knock the Allies out of the Eindhoven pocket. German attacks had strewn the narrow corridor with the burned-out carcasses of many armored vehicles and tanks. Ambulances streamed back from Eindhoven with wounded personnel.

As for ourselves, we were delighted to overtake another large tank unit as we moved out of Hechtel. Joining it, we felt a lot more secure. Near Eindhoven we began meeting some of our Airborne boys. I've never seen soldiers who looked more tired and spent than did those Eagles of our 101st. The drop had not been too successful. Scattered in small groups, the men had been forced to pit their light guns against some of the best and heaviest equipment in the German arsenal. Many of our men had had to use the cover of the woods to offset the hard-hitting German armor. Ultimate victory at Eindhoven can be attributed directly to the guts and ingenuity of our outgunned paratroopers.

The situation for Alsos was critical. Since no one could know how long the troops would be able to hold Eindhoven, we had to get in and out fast. Because a thorough preliminary study of our target had been made, we were at the Philips Works fifteen minutes after we had reached the city limits. The importance of this plant to Allied Intelligence was evidenced by the fact that a strong British detachment had been assigned the sole duty of seizing and protecting it. We were stopped at the gate by a lieutenant who informed us that no one would be permitted to enter until the arrival of Colonel Strangeways or his representative. But when I identified myself and mentioned Brigadier Williams, he checked a list, picked up a phone and said, "Sir, Lieutenant Colonel

Pash of the American Army is here." He then ordered the gate opened and we drove in.

The Philips Works, a large and modern electronics plant, was expected to yield specific documents relating to research activities not only at the plant but at German research centers. My instructions were to confiscate those documents. I was also to locate and bring to Brussels two top scientists, of whom one happened to be the plant director. In addition, in support of Allied interests, Brigadier Williams and Colonel Strangeways had asked me (1) to get information regarding the condition of the plant, (2) to survey arrangements that could be made for the scientific group when it arrived, (3) to assist the commander of the guard detachment in establishing measures to protect the equipment and documents, and (4) to help him get started in rounding up necessary personnel.

We worked at top speed until late afternoon. I did not consider it necessary to tell the major that we were about to stop at the homes of the two target scientists and invite them to accompany us. At my request, the major checked with the Movement Control officer, who reported that the Germans once more had succeeded in cutting the corridor. We were, in fact, surrounded. That was the strongest and, as it turned out, the last German effort to wipe out the Eindhoven pocket.

My conversation with the major was interrupted by the ringing of the telephone. As he listened, his glance in my direction indicated, "This is a nuisance." Into the phone he barked, "You say he is here? He is what? Demanding admittance? Tell him I'll be down to see him." Turning to me, he explained, "A devil of a chap calling himself Nutting is trying to get in. Says he is the only one with authority to direct operations here. Would you like to go down with me?"

At the gate we found a good-looking young major giving the guard lieutenant a hard time. He said that he represented CIOS and that "Colonel Pash had no authority to enter the plant." The guard commander told Nutting that on the contrary I was there on direct orders from the Commanding General, 21st Army Group, and could direct the disposition of the plant. Nutting became excited and raised his voice.

I pulled rank on him, shutting him up with a curt command. Thereupon the guard commander and I returned to the office.

"We'll prepare to leave Eindhoven at the first opportunity and hope for the best," I told Fiebig. "Make arrangements

for us to eat in two hours. We'll go to the Red Lion Tavern on the main square. I owe you guys at least one solid meal."

Gerry and I then drove to the home of the plant director, a Dr. Holtz, who lived on the south edge of town. We turned our jeep into an attractive tree-lined lane that opened into a beautiful garden. Beyond it on a slight rise stood a modern rambler-type home.

It was obvious at first glance that the fortunes of the owner transcended those of his community or even his nation. The interior of the house, into which we were invited by Mrs. Holtz, a youthful and attractive woman, confirmed my initial impression.

Our hostess served coffee—coffee, no less!—and cookies. Two children joined us carrying a basket of fruit they had picked in their own garden. Dr. Holtz told us that he had heard of our visit to the plant. I promptly invited him to accompany us to Brussels and talk with a group of Allied scientists, and asked that he bring along Von den Pol, the other scientist, also affiliated with Philips. Holtz acquiesced.

I instructed him not to disclose plans for the trip, and to be ready to leave at four. Dr. Holtz had a car, and agreed to use it in exchange for ten gallons of gasoline—a fortune in those days.

Leaving the Holtz place, we jeeped to the Red Lion. We found Carl sitting at an elaborately set table with a large stein beside each plate. He had already sampled the contents of a big beer dispenser in the center of the table. The food was not fancy, but it was tastefully enough prepared and there was plenty of it.

The German breach of the corridor had by this time been repaired and our return to Brussels was accomplished without incident.

By that time the entire Allied scientific intelligence team was assembled at the Palace. They knew from Sam Goudsmit that we had left for Eindhoven in the morning and they expected to hear from us soon—but not that soon, since the precarious situation at Eindhoven was well known. When I walked into the meeting room, still showing the signs of the long jeep ride, the surprise of the gathering did not escape me. Sam Goudsmit was beaming. Alsos had struck again—his outfit! He glanced around the room proudly. "Gentlemen, This is Colonel Pash, who led our unit to Eindhoven," he announced. "What luck have we had, Boris?" Impressed, the

group listened intently to my description of the trip, enthusiastically greeted the news that Holtz and Von den Pol were with us.

Debriefing of the Hollanders developed information of value to all concerned. Alsos profited particularly by the disclosure that Nazi atomic research definitely was being conducted at Strasbourg—and by the first hint that research possibly might be going on in a certain small town in Thuringia.

After a hot bath and a leisurely dinner, I was not looking forward to the one more run that had to be made to Oolen. Gattiker had confirmed the uranium ore's authenticity. Now I had to put into effect the removal plan.

But the trip next day produced no hair-raising or spine-snapping experiences. Allied might had prevailed. The Germans had withdrawn.

A detachment of British Royal Engineers joined me at the plant enclosure. Their battle dress was loose and they wore sleeveless leather jackets. Although informal in manner, they struck me as unusually competent and professional. A rather young captain reported to me for orders. This was the unit detailed by the 21st Army Group to keep our precious material from falling into German hands.

The captain was instructed that nothing was to be moved or even touched, and that no one was to be permitted access to the plant without direct authority from me or Major Furman. After all the fighting they had been through, the men of the Queen's Own, as they called themselves, were delighted by this "vacation" assignment. Brigadier Williams' transport would now furnish the Allied governments with about 70 tons of critical material from the stocks not removed to Germany. Now I could go after the 80-odd tons which were somewhere in France—or so we hoped.

In Brussels, Brigadier Williams told me that travel to Eindhoven was reasonably safe at the moment, although vicious fighting was going on in the Vechel area.

Early Sunday morning, 24 September, I called for Sam Goudsmit at the Palace Hotel. A pleasant surprise was waiting. Lt. Col. Johnny Cave (British), whom I had not seen since the liberation of Paris, was coordinating the Eindhoven intelligence operation. He was to accompany us. Our friendship dated back to our first meeting in Italy, where he had been the intelligence officer of the S-Force. His presence in

Eindhoven would insure the necessary support for my group without the need for me to be there.

At the Philips Works we were able to make quite acceptable arrangements for the investigating scientists. Nutting tried once more to assert himself and keep us out. Again he was cut short. It developed later that he was after some specific components of equipment produced at the plant and wanted to prowl without interference.

This was the first time our scientists had been in an active combat zone. They wore military uniform without insignia. However, the combat men saw nothing strange about them. It was reassuring to see how well the scientists fitted in. Their behavior belied their oft-expressed philosophy that they were not soldiers and should not be expected to act as such. Under fire and in the face of enemy threat, their conduct could not have been criticized by the severest field commander.

By the time all the scientists and technical experts of the various intelligence arms were assembled, Colonel Strangeways had more than 400 men on his hands. Our small operational group left Eindhoven knowing that those were good and dependable hands, and our scientific contingent was well set up to exploit the information at the huge Philips Works.

Meanwhile we had turned up the destination of three of the uranium-laden freight cars sent into France ahead of the Nazi invader of 1940. The three had been ticketed for Toulouse. As we pointed the jeeps toward Paris, I carried in my pocket a letter from H. Lecoin, Director of the Commercial Department of Societe Generale Metallurgique de Hoboken, to Andre Polette, an engineer with the Mineralais et Metaux firm. In translation, the letter read:

Hoboken, 23 September, 1944
Les Anvers

Societe Generale
Metallurgique de Hoboken
Societe Anonyme
Directorate

Dear Mr. Polette:

The bearers of this letter, Colonel Pash, or Major Furman of the American Army, are presently engaged in searching for our uranium.

We would appreciate it if you will provide them with information which you may formerly have obtained concerning the three railroad cars which were delivered to the Toulouse Arsenal, and assist them in ultimately locating the others of which we have no information.

We wish to thank you in advance for your kindness.

Looking forward to the pleasure of hearing from you, we remain, dear Mr. Polette,

Sincerely yours,
H. Lecoin

Much later I was told that the Oolen shipment and the subsequent shipment of materials found in France were to be dropped on Hiroshima—in somewhat altered form, to be sure. But as we headed south that day, the uranium in France had still to be found.

CHAPTER XI

Partisan Country

Our swift successes in Brittany, Paris, Belgium and Holland had already impressed Washington with the idea that nothing was impossible for *Alsos*. The Pentagon kept firing advices at me to the effect that our atomic project sorely needed the uranium supply and that I was expected to come up with it immediately if not sooner. Washington's urgency communicated itself to all of us. Upon reaching the Alsos office at 2 Place d'Opera, we found George Eckman panting to refuel our jeeps and start us off again.

I went into a huddle with George. The operation ahead presented many uncertainties. Our only information about southern France consisted of second-hand reports picked up through British headquarters and conflicting rumors circulating among the various military staffs with which we had been in contact. They all reflected confusion. The strengths and intentions of Nazi forces remaining in the major Atlantic coast ports of France were mysteries. And a disturbing tug-of-war was going on among French partisan groups in southern France. But it was the Perigueux area of central France, on the main road to Bordeaux and about 320 miles south of Paris, that preoccupied us. For M. Polette, to whom I was carrying the letter from Antwerp, was last reported living in Perigueux or the immediate area.

George Eckman briefed me on the tactical situation. Sweeping in from Brittany and Normandy, General Bradley's armies had moved east but remained north of the Loire River. The American and French forces under General Devers, after a successful landing in southern France and the capture of Marseille, were pushing up the Rhone Valley. This left all of central and southwestern France west of the Rhone

River in a fluid condition insofar as Allied control was concerned.

The area was generally believed to be dominated by the Free French Partisans (FFI). But Germans were reported roaming in many areas and to be extremely strong in several pockets along the coast including the Gironde Estuary in the Bordeaux area. George told me that because of the risk, Bryan Conrad was hesitant about letting us proceed. Conrad's reluctance could upset my plans. I went looking for him.

He greeted me cordially and in his jovial manner emphasized that if the operation was to proceed at all it had to be kept top secret. No information was to leak out to either friend or foe. The fact was that a partisan of one Free French sect or another could be as dangerous as a German. Why? Because, Conrad explained, a ticklish situation existed in central and southwestern France. Rivalry among the different French partisan groups was threatening to develop into open clashes.

After the briefing, as the other officers departed, Conrad asked, "Well, you heard. What do you think?"

Half-jokingly, I replied, "With so many Germans around, I'll simply have to double my force. We'll go in two vehicles instead of one and take a couple of extra men."

He lifted his eyebrows, as if thinking how insane could Pash get? But rather than ask for an escort of troops, I preferred to risk the trip with a small group. In that way I could remain inconspicuous and maintain secrecy.

"You're a damn fool, you know?" Conrad said. He hesitated. "But—well, you have my blessing, and I wish I could go with you."

But I had yet to obtain permission to go below the Loire River. A SHAEF directive prohibited Allied units from crossing to the left bank of the Loire. This matter required another quick trip to Versailles, where an assist from my friend, the WAC captain, enabled me to see General Smith. He gave me clearance.

To the reconaissance party consisting of Carl Fiebig, Nick Dolida and myself were added Reg Augustine and Major V. E. Vance, attached to us from General Grove's Manhattan Project. Also enlisted were a vehicle and driver to be assigned by the SHAEF motor pool.

The move was scheduled for the next morning. This afforded a brief but welcome respite. I had been going full

steam since the first days of August and my injured back was complaining loudly. George gave me a quick rundown on his move from London and the future set-up for Alsos in Paris. But most of our conversation concerned the operation in southern France. Major Vance, who was equipped with a Geiger counter, was the key man of our party. His military experience made him a valuable fighting man for our unit as well as a technical one. Nick Dolida, who was to drive one of the vehicles, could competently assist Major Vance while adding a gun to our force. Carl had become an old standby. Reg Augustine was added because of his fluent French and German, and his travel experience in France. George had also borrowed from the SHAEF Motor Pool a Command and Reconnaissance car (C & R) with trailer and driver. Supplies, including many cases of rations, extra ammunition and 30 jerry cans of gasoline, were loaded. We were going into an area where such provisions would be rare.

We took a little country road cutting directly west. As we started to travel in the land of the partisans, we saw evidence of their methods. Every road sign between Orleans and Limoges was smeared over with some kind of black composition that completely obliterated the names of communities and the distances between them. And to add discomfort to confusion, a certain tenseness made itself felt as we reached Salbris, about thirty-five miles south of Orleans. The attitude of the populace had stiffened. Men were watching us from the brush, from the clumps of woods along the road. Because daylight had started to fade, I was getting a little nervous. As we approached Vierzon, fifteen miles farther on, the situation came to a head.

Vierzon had been one of the centers of the real French resistance. During the latter months of the Nazi occupation, the partisans had acquired fairly firm control of much of the countryside. They had been able to set up a roadblock system that not only gave cover from enemy fire but also reduced to a crawl the speed of vehicles passing through.

From a slight elevation, I looked through my field glasses at the roadblock arrangement and the city beyond. Straddling the road was a series of barricades about 4 feet high and 40 feet long. Set on a slant, like chevrons, each cut off about two-thirds of the width of the road. The part left open alternated from side to side so that a vehicle had to veer sharply right and left in an "S" pattern to pass.

We moved on cautiously. Through the glasses three armed men were visible behind the barricades. There was a feeling that eyes were watching us over rifle barrels. A great gust of wind unfurled the French tricolor flag on a flagpole at the first barricade. This was convincing—but not conclusive. In both Italy and France, we had seen German ambushes masquerading behind false colors. "If we stop to look around or consult the others, the men watching might mistake our intentions and open fire. We'd better keep going."

Carl nodded agreement. We continued onward at a slow but steady pace and soon passed through the weaving entrance of the fortified point. A number of men waited with rifles at the ready.

I stood up in the jeep and raised both arms in a gesture of greeting. *"Nous sommes Americain!"*

The partisans relaxed immediately. They turned aside their guns, removed their hats and waved them as they approached us, all shouting at once. Reg Augustine talked to them, explaining that we were an advance American unit traveling south, that I was in command, and that we hoped to spend the night in Vierzon. To our new friends, this was the signal for a celebration that started then and there. Reg Augustine inquired why our initial reception had seemed so hostile. The French spokesman said we were the first Allied soldiers they had seen in field uniform since the French and British troops had withdrawn in 1940. They had expected to see the flat steel helmets peculiar to our Allies. The deep American helmet and our green field jackets had fooled them.

As we left the "front lines" to enter Vierzon, the number of men emerging from the wooded areas indicated the Vierzonites had been out in force to greet the suspected foe. The human telegraph had not been idle. News of the arrival of *les soldats Americain* reached the townsfolk much ahead of us. We found the streets filling with cheering women and children as we entered the town.

The tension built up during our approach had left me limp and restless. I wanted to get out of Vierzon. All that held me was the fact that we had committed ourselves to our hosts, who already were guiding us to the hotel and restaurant. Graciously we were shown to our rooms. Our luggage was brought in, the vehicles chained, and the rotors removed from the distributors by Carl so that the engines could not be started. The precautions were especially necessary in friendly

territory, so admired were American jeeps. Our guides then led us to the large dining hall already packed with curious patrons.

We were shown to a table beside the wall where some of the town dignitaries had gathered to honor us. I spotted the partisan chief and asked him if his patrols were active. While this was an unnecessary question, one had to make sure. He replied that patrols were indeed on duty and we were safe from surprise.

The partisan chief took me to a small building, spotlessly clean inside, where about fifteen beds were occupied by wounded fighters. In a short talk, which I still insist was in French, I extended greetings to the brave French fighters from their comrades in arms and from the people of America. If the patients did not understand me, at least they appreciated my effort, for they cheered wildly and presented me with two five-liter bottles of Calvados.

Many of our new friends were on hand to give us a send-off the next morning. As we drove on, everywhere we saw alert Frenchmen carrying rifles or pistols. They scrutinized us carefully, but apparently word had been passed down and we were not stopped. The roads were in fairly good shape and we had no difficulty rolling on at a good pace until we reached the picturesque old city of Chateauroux.

Somehow we managed to get through the crowds that gathered in the squares—through the celebrants who, champagne bottles in hand, formed human road-blocks—through the ox carts and chugging vintage automobiles clogging narrow streets. Alsos moved on.

CHAPTER XII

Operational Base—*La Meynardie*

In Perigueux, we were given the usual treatment by the ever-celebrating French. But here it had a twist. Word of the "American force" had arrived ahead of us, so the reception was at its height when we arrived. A municipal band was performing, the town was decorated with flags and bunting, the people were on the streets in their colorful Sunday best. Apparently they had thought their town would be responsible for some kind of official welcome when the Allied armies moved south, and they had spent a lot of time, material and effort preparing for it. The arrival of so small a group was something of a disappointment, but not enough to blunt their enthusiasm.

At our first opportunity to sneak away from the well-wishers, we closed in on the address given us in Paris. Andre Polette was not there. Our next step was to visit the local office of the gas company. There Reg was able to determine definitely that Polette was not living in the Perigueux residence. We were told that he probably was with his family at his chateau, La Meynardie, in the small community of La Coquille.

We returned to La Coquille at a leisurely pace in order not to attract undue attention. Threading a small, unpaved road a short distance from the village, we came to the opening in a tall hedge that had been described to us as the entrance to La Meynardie.

Passing through, our vehicles moved along a carriage path on the righthand side of a courtyard flanked by two low buildings. They contained the carriage house, stables, harness shop, storerooms, laundry, flour mill and servants' quarters of past generations. Ahead loomed the impressive old chateau. On its steps waited a pleasant young lady who had come out to greet us.

Very shortly Andre Polette, who had been taking the air in the park of his estate, joined me. He smiled as he shook my hand. He introduced me to his wife and three daughters—Suzanne and Janine, both in their late teens, and Therese, eleven years old.

I then handed the Lecoine letter to Polette and suggested that it would be best if we discussed it in private. In his study, Andre read the letter with deep concentration.

"I am ready to be of assistance to you," he said. "Later we can go into the matter. Meanwhile, you and your men must be tired, no?" As we returned to the entrance hall, he added, "May I offer you the hospitality of my home?"

At my suggestion, Polette and I took a stroll in the garden where we could talk privately. By this time I had impressed upon him the need for absolute secrecy with respect to my mission. He told me again that he would respect that secrecy. He could well understand the necessity for such precautions because, as he explained to me, during the Nazi occupation, the chateau had served as a center for partisan activities. Its womenfolk had given food, first aid and other assistance to partisans who could not otherwise have obtained it.

At Polette's suggestion, La Meynardie was established as our operational center south of the Loire River.

Our evening meal on 27 September, was something for soldiers to remember. The huge table with its hand-carved decorations was presided over by the very gracious Mrs. Polette. Our supplies—used for the meal—astonished our hosts, particularly the abundance of sugar and coffee. During the meal, prepared and served in French style, the reactions of the family were interesting. Polette, an engineer and a businessman, was interested in our plans and projected movements. Our hostess wanted to be sure that for at least a day we would forget the war; she devoted warm attention to each one of us, encouraging us to talk about our families.

I pinned one of my silver oak leaves on Suzanne's dress and told her that she was appointed Headquarters Commandant of our Central France operational base. Our supplies were to be kept under lock and key, and Suzanne would have the key. She was cautioned not to issue gasoline to any of the men for the purpose of taking pretty French girls for rides, including our newly commissioned lieutenant colonel. Major Vance then pinned a gold leaf on Janine, and Reg Augustine gave Therese one of his captain's bars. Everyone enjoyed the

byplay, after which Polette invited us for an after-dinner cognac.

There, before a huge fireplace, we discussed with him some of our pressing problems, including that of avoiding difficulties with the partisans.

On the morning of 28 September, a reconnaissance group composed of Major Vance, Captain Augustine and the SHAEF driver, Mihilik, started out in the C & R to make a search for the carloads of uranium. The only factual information we had was the numbers of the seven freight cars, but we hoped to make the most of it. We agreed to meet at the chateau on Sunday, 1 October, to compare notes and plan further reconnaissance.

I did not go with the first party because a hurried trip to Paris was on my agenda. There had seemed to be some dissatisfaction among the scientists. Sam Goudsmit was not yet fully adjusted to working in the field with the military, and George Eckman had told me that some tension was developing.

Because he wanted to get authorization and supporting documents for whatever action might be required in connections with the materials, Andre Polette also was anxious to get to Paris. As soon as Major Vance and his party had left, Polette, Dolida and I started for Paris in the jeep. But after seven or eight miles, engine trouble developed. There was not another vehicle on the road. I had to get to Paris and back to the chateau in three days. And there I was, stranded some 250 miles from the Eiffel Tower.

After a while, Andre sighted a lumbering old wagon drawn by oxen. We were able to hire the driver to tow us into Chalus. There we located an auto repair shop. Andre arranged to have the jeep put in running shape and, since this would take two days, Dolida remained to drive it back to the chateau. Andre and I went into town, taking with us a spare can of gasoline from the jeep. We found a wood-burning, run-down, overcrowded truck which was engaged in taking local residents to Limoges—for a price, of course. With the aid of some American cigarettes and French francs, we overcrowded the truck a little more. It was an extremely cold and uncomfortable ride, but after two hours and three breakdowns, we covered the 20-odd miles to Limoges.

Again with Andre's help, we checked with the FFI and persuaded them to drive us to Beaugency in one of their "lib-

erated" sedans. This is where our gasoline came in handy. At Beaugency we had no difficulty in getting the MP unit to drive us to Paris in a jeep.

After depositing Andre at his Paris home, the jeep took me to the Royal Monceau Hotel on Avenue Hoch, one of the large tree-lined avenues radiating from the Etoile. Entering the hotel's fine foyer, at about nine in the evening, I found it difficult to believe I was in a combat area. The short round maitre d' in tails and his well-groomed assistant stood at the entrance to the sparkling dining room. I felt quite out of place wearing my wrinkled field uniform and boots and carrying a musette bag.

But when I mentioned my name, the hotel personnel went into fast action. The maitre d' ran into the dining room to inform George of my arrival. A man came from behind the counter to welcome me and give me a key. An elderly bellhop in a long blue apron took my bag and led me to an elevator.

A sitting room with large French windows opening on Avenue Hoch and a large bedroom with an ornate, typically French bath comprised my suite. This was to be my Paris quarters throughout the war, and it gave me considerable pleasure during my trips back from the front.

After some fine hydrotherapy for my aching back—a tubful of hot water—there was no problem that I did not feel capable of resolving. George Eckman reported that the location of our headquarters office had been shifted. With the aid of Commodore Schade, new rooms had been found in the same building with the Navy Mission in France at 9 Rue Presbourg, the narrow street circling the Place d'Etoile. The Navy had made available to us the entire sixth floor, with spacious offices offering a good view of the famous Paris rooftops and their forests of chimneys. We were within five minutes walk of our hotel, ETOUSA headquarters and other important locations.

There were some headaches. Chief among these was a report sent to Washington that our scientists were not getting all the support they felt they should have. The large cities such as Paris and Brussels where the scientists performed most of their work were rapidly acquiring an atmosphere of normality, and it is possible that the gentleman had begun to think of support in terms of what would be possible in Washington, New York or Boston. It was George Eckman's opin-

ion that our new offices and living arrangements would considerably reduce the number of complaints.

Sam Goudsmit, Packy Schade, George Eckman and I met the next morning and reviewed the situation. The Brussels operation came in for some critical discussion, particularly the travel and billet arrangements. The difficulty our scientists were having in moving around Paris also had caused some discontent. The field commanders were establishing regulations which could at times be restrictive.

During the discussion, Sam Goudsmit reported that his sleuthing in Paris had uncovered the activities of a German who had headed the Paris office of a Nazi war materials procurement agency. He thought the man would be valuable because of his knowledge. There seemed little hope of capturing him. But our scientists had found evidence that a woman was involved—the man's secretary, and also much more than a secretary. Apparently the boss had devoted much of his non-business time to her. Additional clues had indicated that the girl was a Belgian, her home being in Eupen. Investigation had even turned up a Eupen address. Sam Goudsmit thought it might be wise to question her. George Eckman agreed to ask the CIC to pick up the girl and bring her to Paris.

Our operations in the Mediterranean area also had to be considered. In anticipation of the Allied push into eastern France and the low countries, it was decided to close our office in Rome. Dick Ham was to bring his unit to France. Major Fisher, Lieutenant Commander Gilfillan and Special Agent Ralph Cerame were to accompany him to Marseilles to conduct investigations in that area, and then proceed to Paris.

Two important problems remained—coordination of our operations in southern France with the movement of the Mediterranean group to France, and arrangements for a task force to pick up the uranium when it was found. George Eckman had the action on both these problems.

CHAPTER XIII

The Geiger Counter Ticks

On the morning of 30 September, Andre Polette and I were once again heading for partisan country. This energetic man now carried with him a letter of introduction from the Director of Chemical Industries, Ministry of Industrial Production, to the Director of the Poudrerie Nationale de Toulouse (Toulouse Governmental Arsenal). That was as much an accomplishment as obtaining five Pentagon concurrences in one day.

On Sunday the Vance group returned. Its inspection of records at numerous railroad stations supported the information that three carloads of uranium should be in storage at the Toulouse arsenal, as indicated in Lecoine's letter to Andre Polette. There was no clue to the other four cars.

Our next step, obviously, should be to go to Toulouse, verify the presence of the material and determine the amount. A detailed reconnaissance of the arsenal and the city were also vital in order that plans could be developed for the removal operation. From Toulouse we would go to Bordeaux to investigate certain lesser targets on our list and to gather intelligence for Bryan Conrad's office. Carl Fiebig was alerted for a trip to Paris with instructions for George Eckman. I sent him the outline of our plan and asked to have Fiebig and Beatson meet us in Bordeaux on Wednesday, 4 October. They were to let us know whether any additional targets should be investigated. With arrangements completed, we had time to attend church and return to the chateau for an afternoon rest.

Andre Polette told us that partisans in the Toulouse area were active and might make trouble. I mentioned that Carl Fiebig was carrying to Eckman my request to send some American flags to be displayed on our vehicles.

As we approached our jeep at 8:30 the next morning, we

found Suzanne and a gardener attaching an American flag to my jeep. The sewing of it had required many hours of work. The stripes were made of individual strips of red and white cloth. To create the blue field with the stars, she had cut out stars in two pieces of blue cloth, placed a white cloth between them, and sewed them all together. The flag was attached to a wooden staff and tied to the right fender of my jeep. It was to bring immediate and enthusiastic recognition from French partisans and country folk. It flew on my jeep throughout our operations in southern France and is now one of my cherished mementos of World War II.

We arrived in ancient Toulouse at 3:30 and found evidence that the FFI was in full control. This called for caution on our part. Now that the Germans were hemmed in along the coast and the danger of combat reduced to a minimum, a lot of trigger-happy men were walking around wanting to display their courage.

As expected, we were questioned about our business in Toulouse because it was understood that the Allied forces were not to enter this area. There were plenty of curious souls among the top partisans who were fearful that the Army might come in, take away their newly acquired authority, put them into uniform and make them get down to real fighting on the battle front. Our stock answer to questions was that we were an inspection team from Allied Headquarters, checking on the availability of ordnance supplies.

Thanks to the letter carried by Andre Polette, we met M. Albert, Chief Engineer of the Arsenal. A flash of my credentials gained his cooperation. He could not tell us if he had any special materials but would let us inspect the arsenal ourselves.

At the arsenal he introduced the manager, whom he told that we were from Supreme Headquarters in Paris, had permission to inspect the place and—as stated in Polette's papers—could remove items of interest to us. I thanked Albert and told him that we would not impose further on his services. He took the hint and left. Then Polette and I deliberately kept the arsenal personnel occupied while Major Vance and Reg Augustine searched for the material. After a while Reg called me aside. "Colonel, the Geiger needle jumped."

It had reacted to some material stored in barrels in one of the warehouses. The markings indicated that the barrels had been shipped from Belgium. A close check confirmed that

there were about 31 tons in this shipment—the weight of the three carloads reported sent to Toulouse. Other warehouses were inspected for cover purposes, but we were confident that the initial step of our mission had been accomplished.

Reg Augustine accompanied me to the Chief Engineer's office in the city proper. I knew a little deception would be necessary, and I did not want to involve Polette for fear it might cause him embarrassment at some future date.

Discussing our "inspection" with Albert, I told him that we had located, among other things, some material shipped from Belgium early in the war and that the Belgium Government had been making inquiries about it.

"Colonel," he said, "I know nothing about this material. It was sent here for me to keep, and I was told not to list it in my records."

"That's fine," I replied. "When my inspection trip is completed, I am going north. I will then take up the matter with the proper authorities. You will hear from them regarding disposition of the material. Meanwhile, since we know it is here and safe, I suggest that you change nothing."

On the morning of 3 October, a short reconnaissance was made of the area around the arsenal and the roads leading out of Toulouse toward Marseilles, after which we left for Bordeaux. Andre Polette suggested that we take the time to stop at Moissac to see the entrance to the cathedral, a fine example of twelfth century art.

In Bordeaux we checked into the Hotel Splendide and splendid it was. But across the square stood a large building blocked off by a barbed-wire maze. Armed men of the typical "liberation" variety were entering and leaving the building.

In the hotel we ran across an American unit from the Sixth Army Group. It also was on an intelligence mission but its objectives had to do with various German administration and security organizations and their French collaborators. Consequently our fields of interest did not conflict. This was our first contact with the 6th Army Group, which had invaded southern France and was moving up the Rhone Valley.

Our primary mission in Bordeaux was to find, if we could, clues to the missing four carloads of the uranium shipment. A secondary mission had been wished on us by our Navy scientists. They wanted us to investigate reported new devel-

opments in German destroyer construction, particularly with respect to armament control. Some of the experimental equipment was supposed to have been installed on vessels docked at Bordeaux. A third objective, probably chosen for us because of our successful report on Antwerp, was information about the port of Bordeaux and the tactical situation in the area. The primary mission was unsuccessful. The others were not.

Major Vance, Reg Augustine and Pvt. Mihalik remained in Bordeaux to pursue our uranium hunt in the south. They were to meet us at the Grand Hotel in Toulouse on the evening of 10 October. Meanwhile I would rush to Paris to activate my plan to recover the 31 tons of uranium on 11 October. Then Andre Polette, Carl Fiebig, Gerry Beatson and I started back. Polette was dropped off at La Coquille and the rest of us continued on to Paris.

We were carrying considerable intelligence for Bryan Conrad—plans of the port of Bordeaux and calculations of its effectiveness; an assessment of the tactical situation with regard to the Nazi forces there; a report on a destroyer recently under construction and, above all, a survey of the shaky internal situation caused by the warring partisan factions. Bordeaux was a powder keg with the fuse burning.

About noon of 6 October, I acquainted George Eckman, Packy Schade and Sam Goudsmit with my operational plan. George Eckman and I then joined Conrad at the Majestic Hotel. He received with great interest my report on Bordeaux and southern France and the outline of my recovery plan. I emphasized that Toulouse was in the midst of a partisan area; the partisan leaders were feeling their oats and might resent Americans taking material out of the arsenal, which they probably considered as now belonging to the partisan organization. My report concluded with the statement that because of Washington's interest in the material, it was my intention to take it regardless of obstacles. To do this it would be necessary for me to have a well-armed truck company to haul the material and a group to provide combat support.

Then started one of those typical staff shuttles. The matter had to pass through a Colonel Meachan and then a Colonel Ayres. I could see that Bryan Conrad was a little unhappy.

"Who can designate the truck outfit?" I asked.

"General Ross, the Chief of Transportation."

"Suppose I see him?"

"I'll tell him you're coming. His office is down the Champs. Meanwhile I'll get this headquarters lined up on the orders."

General Ross cordially asked what he could do for me. I noticed a colonel, his back toward me, standing beside the window. General Ross did not introduce him and, as far as I was concerned, he could have been a casual visitor—certainly not entitled to hear our discussion. Admittedly the General could not have known that my mission was classified, because Bryan Conrad had made the contact over the phone through the G-4. At any rate, I made a tactical blunder. "General, my mission is highly classified, and for your information only. May I request that the colonel be kind enough to leave while we discuss my request?"

I had seen generals blow their tops before but this one was the worst eruption yet. In most definite language he told me that he would have no lieutenant colonel, overwhelmed with his own importance, insult his executive officer, a full colonel. Nor would he have a lieutenant colonel tell a general how to run his office and stand there unconcerned about it all. He figuratively if not literally kicked me out of his office, telling me to report back to headquarters and wait until he was ready to take up the matter with the Chief of Staff.

But I stood my ground. "General, I should like to apologize to the colonel. Had I known he was a member of your staff, I would have explained the nature of my visit and let you decide who should attend the discussion. Such precautions are not of my personal choice. But I am here with direct orders from the War Department to discuss my mission only with those senior officers concerned. I am restricted in the manner in which I can conduct my activities."

To which Ross replied, "Get out!"

Thoroughly disturbed, I saluted and left him. Failure to procure the truck unit could prove fatal to my operational schedule. I wanted a chance to clear my mind, so instead of getting into the jeep I told Gerry to meet me at the Majestic.

Having cooled off somewhat by the time I reached Bryan Conrad's office, I related my run-in with General Ross. Picking up the phone to call General Ross, Conrad murmured, "I should have handled this myself in the first place." I added, "Amen." Then I heard Conrad explain to General Ross that "Boris Pash is not a bad guy. He's here from Washington on one of those top priority missions of direct interest to Gen-

eral Eisenhower. Boris badly needs your assistance, sir. Specifically, he requires the best truck company in the Army. You are the one who can give that to him."

My second call on General Ross was much different. He and his executive greeted me with smiles indicating they bore no grudge. I explained in general terms the use I intended making of the truck unit. Ross thereupon promised to order his best unit taken off the "Red Ball Express"—the vital supply run for advancing combat forces. The colonel asked if I had any special instructions that should be passed to the unit commander. "Yes, Colonel. The operation will be in southwest France. So although no trouble is anticipated, the unit should be prepared to fight. The men should be under full arms including hand grenades, and the trucks should mount 50-caliber machine-guns. Supplies for ten days should be carried. The time and place for our rendezvous will be given to the CO, whom I should like to see tomorrow."

I checked out the plans. Bob Blake was to be prepared to take over the operation if I ran into trouble. The move out of Paris would be made on the morning of 9 October. The task force would assemble at Rambouillet and bivouac for the night at Argenton. That would mean a 200-mile run. Mountaban was the goal for the second day, a run of about 220 miles. The task force would make the run directly from Mountaban to the arsenal on the morning of 11 October. George Eckman was to arrange for the commander and executive officer of the truck unit and the officers of the combat support unit to report in on 8 October for instructions. He was also to instruct Dick Ham at Marseilles to meet me there on 12 October, and on the day of our departure he was to initiate action to have the Navy designate a ship to stand by at Marseilles ready to pick up the material.

CHAPTER XIV

The Red Ball Express Delivers

The officers from a military intelligence battalion reported in next day. They were the leaders of eight three-man teams to be attached as combat support for the operation. The teams were composed of selected men who, besides their ability to fight, had qualifications as French linguists and intelligence specialists. They would be especially valuable if we got into trouble with the French partisans. The twenty-four men riding in eight jeeps, each jeep mounting a machine-gun, formed a light but efficient and mobile fighting unit.

Lt. John (Jack) Edell also reported in. A young transportation man from Red Wing, Minnesota, he was commanding officer of the 3342nd Truck Company. His unit was based about 60 miles west of Paris, from where it was shuttling supplies between bases in Normandy and front-line depots. It was part of the famed Red Ball Express.

The assembled officers could not help but guess that they were embarking on an unusual mission. I let slip that we might be required to collect certain material, such as arms and ammunition, abandoned by hostile forces in southern France.

On the night of 8 October, as the trucks of the 3342nd rolled in from their run with the drivers anticipating some rest and relaxation, maybe a softball game or a little poker, they were met by the Exec, Lt. Larry Brown of Detroit. He directed them to a preselected assembly area. "All right men," he said. "Stand by your vehicles."

Instantly all personnel knew something was in the wind. A tense silence fell over the unit.

Lieutenant Edell, the CO, then appeared, followed by his senior NCO's.

"Men," said Edell, "we have been selected for a special

mission. It's so secret that you will not discuss it even among yourselves. I want every truck in perfect running condition and that's an order. Those with mounts will draw 50-caliber guns. Light mortars will be issued to every other truck. Each man will see that his rifle or carbine is in working order. You will draw ammunition and hand grenades." Edell took a deep breath. "I can tell you this. General Ross was asked to produce the best damn truck outfit in the ETO—and he chose us. I want Colonel Pash, the Task Force Commander, to see that we're just that—the finest outfit in the Army. We'll pull out tomorrow at three-thirty in the morning."

Never was there a more dedicated unit than those boys of the Red Ball Express who won everlasting fame in the war. And never did military equipment receive more devoted care than theirs.

The Alsos group on hand was now reduced to Blake, Fiebig, Dolida, Furman and myself. Gerry Beatson was with Fred Wardenberg, the scientist, in northern France, still hunting the missing freight cars of uranium. Nat Leonard was supporting other scientists.

Carl and I pulled out at four o'clock on the morning of 9 October, heading for our rendezvous point. Bob Furman and Nick Dolida were to catch up with us later.

The MI teams and the 3342nd were waiting for us at Rambouillet. Captain Blake had been sent ahead to contact the commanders and arrange the march requirements. Our immediate concerns were first to avoid ambush and second to keep our ultimate objective from becoming known to the French.

As I drove my jeep to the head of the array and gave the signal to move out, my spirits were high, my feelings mixed. I was leading a keyed-up combat unit into an operation whose ultimate success would depend on avoiding combat.

I U-turned and rode down the column, waving greetings to the men. They responded in like manner, each taking a good look at the officer responsible for pulling them off routine duty to lead them into a mysterious adventure. Genuine pleasure was on every face.

At Orleans we turned west along the Loire River, making for Beaugency—still the only place where the river could be crossed. We reached the Beaugency bridge before noon. An MP company was in control, supported by a battalion of in-

fantry. The officer in charge of the bridge helped us achieve a smooth movement of the column across the river.

The men became more alert as we approached Vierzon. The unique barricades impressed them as much as they had us on our first visit. One of the intelligence teams was sent to inform the partisans of our approach, and we received a friendly greeting. However, we kept the column moving. The narrow bridge on the Cher River slowed us to a crawl and gave the men an opportunity to pick up on the run bottles of *vin rouge* to enjoy at dinner that evening.

Bob Furman and Nick Dolida, who had been delayed in Paris, caught up with us shortly after we left Vierzon. They related a curious story. At the Beaugency bridge, the sergeant on duty had told them that "an armored column with heavy tanks, led by a brigadier general, had crossed about noon." Furman assumed that my oak leaf had been mistaken for a brigadier's star, and that rumor had placed armor plate and cannon on our trucks. We considered this fortunate. If there were Germans around with belligerent ideas or partisans inclined to annoy us, reports of such a formidable force in the region might check their enthusiasm.

The cool morning of 10 October promised a pleasant day. The column rolled. Two jeeps went ahead with Carl Fiebig in one of them. We were approaching Limoges, where I did not plan to stop because it was such a large partisan center. The advance party checked the roads through Limoges and kept them open. If any questions were raised, the FFI were to be told that an American convoy was en route to Marseilles and could not be delayed.

Lieutenant Brown, Carl Fiebig and one of the intelligence teams were dispatched to the Montauban area to prepare the bivouac for the night. Late in the afternoon we spotted one of the advance jeeps six miles north of Montauban. Without slowing the convoy, the jeep assumed the lead and, 200 yards farther along, pulled off into a barely visible side road. Without hesitation, the big two-and-a-half ton trucks followed the jeep into a large clearing surrounded on three sides by high, rocky ground. A farmhouse and barns were visible some 400 yards away. With the skill of a ringmaster, Larry Brown directed the trucks into a semicircle.

One of the team was detailed to the farmhouse with some of our rations, cigarettes, candy and other niceties likely to have been denied the family during the occupation.

Guards were posted and the camp scouted to see that no one lurked about. At seven in the evening the men were assembled for my briefing. Their tension was unmistakable.

"Men, I'm going to tell you what our mission is. After I do, no one is to talk about it and no one is to leave the bivouac area. We are about thirty-six miles from the city of Toulouse, where there is a French government arsenal in which certain vital material is stored. Toulouse is a French partisan stronghold and they might feel that controlling the arsenal is their business. But tomorrow morning you will make a direct run for the arsenal where on orders from Washington you will load the material. I don't believe that the arsenal authorities will object. However, if they do object, I intend to take the stuff anyway. If they resist, we'll fight to get it. However, no one is to start any fighting without a direct order from me." There was no sound from the men.

The silence was so thick that I believe the twinkling of the stars could be heard. But it lasted only a few seconds longer. Suddenly I heard a husky, muffled voice. "I hope the hell they don't wanna give it to us." That provoked laughter and a general relaxation of tension.

I explained the plan. The convoy would take off early enough to be within a thirty-minute run of the arsenal at nine o'clock in the morning. Jack Edell was to lead the column through Toulouse and into the arsenal grounds, where guides were to be posted to direct movement. The truck tarpaulins were to be drawn so that no one could tell whether the vehicles were loaded or empty. The men were to be friendly with any personnel in the arsenal, and were to hand out chocolate, cigarettes and soap freely to show their good will. The material to be loaded in barrels, dangerous to touch and very heavy. Gloves were to be issued, and after the material was loaded the gloves were to be discarded into a box conveniently placed. When the loading was finished, the trucks were to leave the arsenal by a different exit which would bring them again to Highway 20, where they were to turn south and proceed six miles to the little town of Gernet. There they would turn east, which would bring them to Highway 113 leading to Marseilles. The men were to be prepared to keep moving all night.

Additional instructions were given to the intelligence men. Four of the teams were to take off in the morning so as to reach Toulouse by 8:30. One team was to remain at the main

gate of the arsenal. Frenchmen who had passes to enter would be permitted to do so, but no one was to be allowed to leave before the last Alsos vehicle pulled out. Two other teams were to cover the other two entrances, while the fourth was to stand by for emergency. On the run to Marseilles three were to act as safeguard, remaining half a mile behind the column. Because I intended to spend the night in Toulouse, I placed Jack Edell in command of the convoy.

With all the arrangements made, I took Edell and Carl Fiebig and went into Toulouse to meet Vance and Augustine.

In Toulouse, Vance and Reg reported that the arsenal office opened at 8:30 and the Chief Engineer arrived at nine. After a brief conference during which final plans were made, Carl Fiebig and Jack Edell returned to the encampment. Carl was to bring the combat teams into Toulouse next morning.

At 8:30 A.M. on 11 October, I walked out of the hotel to find five jeeps lined up. A few minutes after nine, we reached the arsenal office. The Chief Engineer nodded a greeting. "Well, Monsieur Colonel, I see you have returned."

"Yes, monsieur. You will recall the material we discussed. After reporting to the authorities in the north, I was instructed to remove it."

"The Colonel has a paper to show his instructions?"

"A paper?" I exclaimed. "Monsieur, I have orders!"

"I shall discuss the matter with our directors," said the Chief Engineer. "When will the Colonel be ready to move the material?"

"Monsieur Engineer," I replied, taking the man by the arm and leading him to the window, "I am ready now. And I cannot delay."

On the opposite side of the street were four jeeps with machine-guns uncovered and ammunition belts in place. Twelve men sat in the jeeps, carbines and Tommy-guns pointing upward, butts braced against the men's thighs. I must say that the unit, although small, looked completely cut-throat.

"I understand," said the Chief Engineer, sighing. "I shall accompany you to the arsenal."

"Please ride with me," I said.

We approached the moat on the eastern side and crossed by a narrow bridge. A high wall concealed everything within the arsenal proper. The Chief Engineer and I dismounted and approached the big solid gate. He ordered the guards to open up. As previously arranged, Vance and Augustine took him

and one of our teams to the warehouse on the island section of the arsenal, where the material was stored.

Reg Augustine immediately directed the few men on duty to move the stored materials around so that we could easily reach any item. Our boys handed out cigarettes and chocolate bars and conversations commenced at once. Friendly relations were soon established. The workers rolled the barrels around with enthusiasm amid cheerful banter. A few minutes later I returned to the gate to see Jack Edell's jeep roll onto the bridge, the trucks strung out behind.

I believe the men of the 3342nd Truck Company were showing off. In an apparently rehearsed maneuver they came over the bridge, maintaining precise distances and a steady speed. Inside the arsenal they formed a single line of trucks —a company front. To do this, each truck had to enter through the gate, make a sharp turn right and, a hundred feet farther on, wheel abruptly left. If a column of heavy trucks can be said to have rhythm and grace, the vehicles of the 3342nd exhibited them that day. Led by Eddie Dolan and Harold Brown in the first truck, the men smiled and silently cheered each other as do players on a team which has just taken the upper hand and feels confident it controls the situation. But I thought disappointment could be detected on some faces—no one had offered resistance.

Guides placed by Carl Fiebig directed the vehicles to the proper warehouse. As the first rolled up for loading, the crew put on the gloves previously issued, grabbed a barrel and stopped to exchange glances. Their thoughts were obvious. It was inconceivable that anything packed into a small barrel could be so heavy. Uranium, of course, is one of the heaviest metals known.

As they loaded, the men would occasionally see a film of fine yellow dust remaining on the ground or on their gloves. One could almost see them wonder. Were we taking gold away from the French? If so, they were sure to hit us some time during the operation. The men could be seen checking their weapons as they climbed into the cabs. The operation had been proceeding exactly as planned and now the trucks began rolling out onto Highway 20 headed in the direction of the Spanish border. The arsenal workers waved and cheered as the column pulled out.

When the rear guard disappeared through the gate, I followed with M. Albert, the Chief Engineer. At his office, I

signed a receipt for the material; we shook hands, and I moved on to join the unit, leaving Toulouse by Highway 113. Major Vance remained in the area with two men to continue hunting for our lost carloads. We agreed to meet in Montauban on 14 or 15 October.

A few miles beyond Villefrenche-de-Lauraguais, we reached the intersection where the Task Force hit Highway 113. Every vehicle passed by and kept rolling. I planned to remain with the force until it got beyond Carcassone. This was another important partisan center, and I wanted to be sure that word had not been sent from Toulouse to stop us. The convoy passed below the old fortress, La Cite, high up on a rocky hill. No trouble was encountered. During the 300-mile run to Marseilles we would have to cross the Rhone River, and the nearest crossing was at the ancient walled city of Avignon about fifty miles north of Marseilles. The only means to get across, though, was a barge run by an enterprising Frenchman.

Two armed jeeps were sent ahead with French-speaking personnel to prepare for the passage of the convoy. They did a fine job. The story spread on the "QT" was that a special convoy was being ordered to Marseilles to pick up important supplies in support of operations in southern France. The barrels were covered with tarpaulins and the canvas drops on the trucks were left open—giving the appearance of empty vehicles.

A short distance out of Carcassone, I called a halt and the men had a late lunch. At that point, accompanied by one of the intelligence teams, I parted with the convoy and headed for Marseilles. Reg Augustine was left in command.

A long queue of civilian French vehicles and carts waited at the ferry crossing. Avignon, located on the right bank of the Rhone, is a medieval wonderland, but there was no time for sightseeing and I did not intend to queue up for passage across the river. We moved our two jeeps forward. To my surprise, the French, including the ferry owner, insisted that I wait my turn. Some even accompanied their objections with threats. It became necessary for us in turn to threaten half a dozen hotheads before all were convinced that under the circumstances I had the right of way. Because of this situation I dispatched a jeep, instructing the driver to tell Captain Au-

gustine to send an advance party to seize the ferry and hold it for the length of time the convoy would require for crossing.

Later I learned that when Augustine's three advance jeeps approached the crossing about 10:30 that night, the ferry was on the opposite bank and the operator showed no inclination to put it into operation. Failing to get cooperation from the bargemaster, the commander of the advance party obtained a skiff. Crossing the river, they forced the attendant to operate the ferry.

Meanwhile I had my own problems. A few miles to the south we ran into a complicated road intersection devoid of directional signs. Some bystanders, in response to our query, indicated a road which we followed. After forty-five minutes it was clear that we were lost in the hills east of Avignon. Moreover, gas was getting low. Fortunately, a dilapidated bus came through at about ten o'clock and the driver gave us directions. We could not share his fuel, because his vehicle was burning small blocks of wood. Finally we reached the main highway but were out of gas. I held up a passing truck and took some gasoline out of its tank.

We reached Marseilles about 10:30, ninety minutes behind schedule. I reported to base headquarters immediately and talked to the duty officer. He had not been alerted for our arrival and was strongly inclined to take no action that night. Finally, upon my insistence, he contacted General Ratay, Commanding General of the Marseilles Base Section. The General was aware of our operation. He told me that arrangements had been made to handle the material, but suggested that because of the late hour the convoy remain on the outskirts and enter the port area in the morning.

General Ratay informed me next morning that a Navy transport was scheduled to carry the uranium to the States and a warehouse had been designated for its storage pending the ship's arrival. Commander Hall was to handle the details regarding the freighter. Lieutenant Colonel Henderson, of General Ratay's staff, would take charge of the cargo pending shipment.

The convoy rolled into Marseilles but the attitude of the people was somewhat surprising. For example, a street car blocked the convoy's path because the motorman refused to stop and let it pass. Twice when it tried to pass, the motorman picked up speed to remain just ahead, encouraged by his passengers. I then maneuvered my jeep in front of the trolley

and rammed it by backing into it. That surprised the motorman and shook up the passengers.

It was a great relief when the trucks, one by one, turned into a warehouse in the port area and unloaded the barrels.

The trucks did not go back empty. They carried gasoline to the 6th Army Group which, thanks to its rapid advance up the Rhone Valley, was in dire need of supplies.

The next day, Majors Ham and Fisher arrived from Rome. They were to remain in the Marseilles area for a while before joining us in Paris. Reg Augustine would remain also, and accompany the shipment to its destination in the United States. All the intelligence teams except the one commanded by Lt. W. Wallace Ryan of New York were released to return to their base near Paris. Wally Ryan was a capable young officer, and I wanted to have him observed by my team.

On the way to Montauban, we again encountered difficulties at Avignon. The situation became so ugly that we had to threaten some of the more aggressive elements with our weapons. But at Carcassone things were a bit friendlier.

We found Andre Polette at the chateau, where we were greeted by his family as old friends. He was delighted by our success and we were most grateful for the assistance he had given us. He decided to ride to Paris with us.

I was to find out later that the loading of the uranium ore presented quite a problem. Reg Augustine was faced with the aggressive curiosity of everyone who had contact with the operation.

One barrel slipped through the loading net and fell into the bay, sinking "faster than a rock." This gave further credence to the "gold" story. The hypersensitive French feared a plot by the Americans. Accordingly, a rumor soon circulated that the French government, such as it was, planned official action to stop the Americans from taking the "gold" out of the country. This rendered the entire operation very delicate.

However, after a Navy diver had recovered the lost barrel, Reg Augustine managed to get the entire shipment loaded aboard the transport. A few days later he made delivery in Boston. Had security permitted the open handling of this operation, our government would have been willing to pay any price for the material.

CHAPTER XV

The Lull Between Storms

Our return to Paris was cheerful. No immediate operations were in view and I looked forward to some relaxation during the lull. Carl's thoughts must have paralleled mine.

My thoughts also were about my deputy and buddy—George Eckman. I was wondering how he would react to certain plans I had in mind. He always told me my schemes were wild but consistently carried them out. Toward the end of the war, asked what his responsibilities were, he replied, "Keeping Boris out of trouble. Boris dashes around stepping on a lot of toes—I follow up to smooth things out. The commanders sometimes would like to hang him, but its my neck they get at. Why, on three separate occasions Bryan Conrad threatened to court martial me for Boris's freewheeling!"

By the middle of October, 1944, the situation was not yet that bad, but I was fast getting there. Hearing my proposals, George would usually counsel, "You know that's practically impossible." But then he would flash that broad, shy smile of his, spread his hands and say, "Here we go again! All right, I'll try." And when George tried, he succeeded.

As soon as I reached Paris, I gave him another of those "practically impossible" assignments. "Look, there are two officers and two NCO's in that truck outfit who I want transferred to Alsos. Their names are Jack Edell, Larry Brown, Eddie Dolan and Harold Brown. And there's a Lieutenant Ryan with the MI team. Get him, too."

And although many administrative problems were involved, the fine hand of George Eckman was to prevail. Wally Ryan did not go back to his outfit but remained with us on temporary duty until assigned in November. The others reported to Alsos in March of 1945.

That evening George Eckman countered with his own lit-

tle surprise: "Wait until you hear what Washington has for us this time. You think chasing freight cars all over France is fun? Well, there's a radiogram in my office ordering us to get water from the Rhine River and ship it to the Pentagon."

"Water from the Rhine! What the hell for?"

"According to Sam, if an analysis of the water shows traces of radioactive waste, it could indicate atomic research being conducted on the Rhine or one of its tributaries."

"Have we reached the Rhine?"

"You're damned right we have. Our guys have captured the Nijmagen Bridge. And by golly, Washington wants bottles of that water."

"Is Bob Blake in town?" To George's nod, I continued. "Have him report to the office tomorrow morning. He can handle this mission."

Next morning found me still in the clouds. The paintings of cupids on walls and ceilings, the gilded designs of the cornices and ceiling decorations, the sunlight streaming through the slits of the wooden shutters, and the ever so soft and comfortable bed at the Hotel Royal Monceau, all these delayed a return to earth and reality.

George's voice cut through the door. "You field men are supposed to be up with the roosters!"

George Eckman marched into the room. "Don't forget to put on your Class A uniform. ETO headquarters here is as bad as the Pentagon."

The first thing to take up was the matter of the Rhine water. It seemed to me to be a one-man job, with Bob Blake best qualified to tackle it. He would have to travel through the narrow corridor of U.S.-held ground at the approaches to Nijmagen. I procured clearances for the operation from the 12th and 21st Army Groups.

While Bob was on the Rhine water mission, I would go to 6th Army Group Headquarters and discuss our forthcoming Strasbourg operation. Gerry Beatson, Carl Fiebig and Nat Leonard were to complete the Strasbourg team and I intended to join them.

As we were wishing Bob good luck, the ever-practical George Eckman gave him a packet of maps and briefed him on the fighting in the Nijmagen area.

"I'd hate to have a man killed over a bucket of water from any river," George told me after Bob had left. "Especially a man just married."

"You mean Bob Blake?"

"That's right," George told me, and filled me in on some of the details.

It seems Bob Blake had been overseas for more than two years and in combat continuously since landing in Africa in 1943. He had been promised a trip home at the first opportunity and must have so advised his fiancee—the opportunity being provided by certain documents and reports that had to be delivered to Washington. One day she called the Pentagon to inquire when Captain Bob Blake was expected back. Because of his assignment, her call reached the Deputy G-2, Brig. Gen. John Weckerling, who informed her that he knew nothing of a trip to Washington by any Captain Blake. On the third call, General Weckerling told her, "Young lady, we are not running a travel service bureau. Your captain, whoever he is, must be fighting a war." However, General Weckerling was good enough to have his aide find out about "this chap, Blake" and graciously gave the girl sufficient information for her to set a tentative wedding date. They were married, and Captain Blake was now on his way to the Rhine with bucket in hand.

Having got that off his chest, George Eckman settled down to give me the good and bad of the news accumulated during my absence. The first item amused me. It concerned a British report describing "an intolerable situation in the Theater of Operations" and including an urgent request from the British Government that the United States Government take measures to stop a group called Alsos from disrupting the program of technical intelligence.

The matter had been brought to our attention in a strictly formal communication from the War Department G-2. Missing was the friendly touch usually characterizing letters to me written by Colonel Bill Adams for the G-2 signature. It directed me to explain the circumstances whereby Alsos operations had created tension between the two governments.

Specifically, the British charged that when Allied intelligence teams reached a target, a group calling itself Alsos had already been there and had taken such documents and personnel as they saw fit. The British asked the American Government to curtail Alsos operations. The British complaint was supported by the "30 Commandos" of Ian Fleming—later of James Bond fame—and by U.S. intelligence groups.

It was fortunate that we had direct communication with

Washington. If such a letter had come through the normal channels of the European Command, our days probably would have been numbered.

Letting off steam, I barked at George, "My God, you know that British outfits like the 30 Commandos and the CIOS team—along with our own OSS and other intelligence groups—always come into a captured city a day or two behind the assault troops. When they do arrive, they first worry about their own comfort and look around for a nice place to stay and so forth. I can see in this complaint the thumbprint of the Combined Intelligence Objectives Subcommittee, which has always tried to harness our activities, control the time and manner of our movements. There's a mistaken opinion among the groups that we are competing with them. I personally would not mind having them keep up with us, but I certainly don't intend to slow my pace to match theirs."

I knew that I could count on the full backing of our scientists, including the Navy contingent. We all were aware that if Alsos should be subjected to control by some "coordinating" agency, our work would be slowed and our effectiveness reduced.

George Eckman had sent an interim reply informing the Pentagon that "Colonel Pash is now engaged in an operation in the field, and will look into the matter personally upon his return." Something would have to be done to get Washington off our backs and the other groups out of our hair.

I asked George to get in touch with the 30 Commandos, with whom he was on good terms, and learn more about the situation.

The next item on the worry list was our request that the CIC locate and bring to Paris the young lady believed to be in Eupen, Belgium. You will recall that she had been secretary to Peterson, the German connected with the Nazi War Materials Office in Paris. Sam Goudsmit was very anxious to question her. We had already tipped Washington that the man might be a key figure in some activity relating to thorium. That was enough to have us feel the hot breath of the Pentagon on our necks from clear across the Atlantic.

Having found a lead indicating that the Nazis had taken over a French firm involved in handling thorium, our scientists had investigated the latter. In the course of this probe the names of Peterson and his secretary had turned up. A number of letters had been found which had been interesting

because of their connection with the overall German atomic research picture. A list of registered mail had shown that one letter had been sent to the secretary, a Miss Wessel, in the Belgium town. George Eckman planned a double-check to kindle a fire under the CIC office, which for some time had had our request to get the girl and Peterson as well.

"I can also give you some cheerful news." George produced several letters from the War Department. They contained official comment on our Paris operations, including the first commendation received by Alsos. The commendation, dated 18 September, 1944, was from Major General Clayton L. Bissell, War Department G-2. It informed us that "the preliminary report of Alsos Mission—Paris entry, dated 1 September has been reviewed" and that the information contained therein was a "source of gratification to this office." It continued:

> Both you and the civilian and military members of the Scientific Intelligence Mission are to be commended for the aggressive action and initiative displayed by the Mission's rapid entry into Paris, and the successful attainment of the primary Alsos objective in France.

This was transmitted to me by letter from Brigadier General Osmun, who had replaced General Weckerling. Dated 20 September, 1944, the letter read:

> Dear Colonel Pash:
>
> Your good work in tracking down and taking custody of "the biggest target" [Joliot-Curie] and then taking him to London for questioning was brought to my attention. I brought it to General Bissell's attention, in turn, and asked him to write you a letter of commendation. This letter has been written and a copy of it is being placed in your 201 file . . . Congratulations on your work.

George Eckman informed me that our personnel had been acquainted with the contents of the letter, and added, "Washington is definitely pleased with the way we operate—despite that British squabble. As a matter of fact, we heard informally that some top officers are sorry you didn't take your

outfit through Paris ahead of the French when you entered the city on the 25th of August."

Possible Nazi atomic bomb research in Strasbourg was our main topic of discussion for the rest of the afternoon. The information we had collected had come from several sources. The initial clues, picked up at Rennes, had indicated immediately that Strasbourg was of more than casual interest. Then, after the occupation of Paris, our scientific sleuths had learned that one Dr. Fleischman, a German physicist known to be working in the nuclear field, had been teaching at Strasbourg University. And the investigation by our scientists at the Philips Laboratory in Eindhoven, Holland, had disclosed that special equipment used in atomic research had been ordered by the University. Painstaking analysis of all available information by Sam Goudsmit and his staff had indicated that Fleischman, in all probability, was a key man. The name of von Wiszsacker, a prominent research physicist, was also identified with Strasbourg, along with five other prominent physicists and chemists. Our plans called for capturing these men and holding them for questioning by our scientists.

In the Strasbourg planning, Sam Goudsmit had been very thorough. The deeper Sam had got into the study, the more convinced he had become that the city was an Alsos target of extreme importance. This feeling was transmitted to the rest of us. George Eckman learned through Bryan Conrad that the 6th Army Group expected the assault on Strasbourg to take place early in November. Carefully but with growing excitement we made our preparations.

This city of *pâté de foie gras*, sometimes called the "old jewel of the Rhine," was of interest to our Navy also because of the Brigatti-Trippel plant located nearby, where research was being conducted on torpedoes. And the Mathis plant of Junkers, scene of extensive jet engine studies, concerned not only the Navy but the National Advisory Committee on Aeronautics (NACA) as well.

Reports of experiments on human beings by Dr. Eugene von Haagen, listed as a member of the University faculty, aroused the ire of Alsos. The decision was made to send its Bacteriological Warfare (BW) teams to investigate. Major Barnes (British), Captains William Cromartic and Carlo Henze (American), as well as Lt. James Hoffer USN, were members of that team. The capture of von Haagen became as much an Alsos objective as anything else.

All of this pointed to an early departure for Vittel, the location of the Sixth Army Group Headquarters, where my plans for the Strasbourg operation would have to be cleared. Elements of Lieutenant General Patch's Seventh Army—including our Paris friends, *Deuxieme Division Blinde Francais* were to compose the assaulting force.

Bob Blake was expected back in a couple of days from his Rhine River water quest. I scheduled my trip to Vittel for Saturday, 21 October. The delay would give Bryan Conrad an opportunity to clear my visit. My recent experiences with General Bradley's 12th Army Group indicated that the staff had become formal and restrictive. With my contacts limited to the G-2 section, if it had not been for General Siebert's good will I doubt whether Alsos could have operated within that command as much as it did. Conrad was asked to make a preliminary contact and to give me a letter to Col. Eugene Harrison, the G-2, Sixth Army Group.

During the next days my time was taken up with a review of all our intelligence on Strasbourg and a detailed study of maps of the area and the city plans. However, preliminary planning was also initiated pertaining to other areas in which we expected to conduct operations. Of these, the important ones as of that time were Aachen, Koln and Gottingen in the north and Heidelberg and the Würtemberg in the south, the latter area being the more critical.

Thanks to the addition of Lt. W. Wallace Ryan and Pvt. Joe Lusnia, our operational staff had reached a total of 15, of whom 3 were still in the south of France en route to Paris after the deactivation of our Mediterrean office. Our scientific group had grown to 28, including 13 civilians, 7 Army and 7 Navy officers and a civilian secretary. Civilian scientists in the theater were given assimilated military ranks to provide status in event of capture and to facilitate administration of personal needs. All our civilians were assimilated colonels.

The 15 consisted of 8 officers, 4 CIC agents and 3 enlisted men. Because more areas containing research laboratories and industrial plants were falling into Allied hands, and because our number of scientists was increasing, the 4-man, 2-jeep task force of our Paris days had become totally inadequate. It was no longer possible to move our scientific teams as a unit. Some wanted to roam about Paris investigating various offices and installations, some desired to visit other French cities or go into Belgium or Holland. We had to have the men to escort

the scientists, the vehicles to permit travel. In addition, our operational group had to be ready to join attack forces in assaulting important targets still in enemy hands. But experience had shown that a task force armed only with carbines and riding in open jeeps unnecessarily exposed our men to enemy fire. They were particularly vulnerable to snipers in built-up communities. Furthermore, because of the danger we could not take our scientists to forward areas together with the combat element of the task force. This meant that in every operation we had to move two echelons. We hoped that the Pentagon would understand the situation and remedy it.

George Eckman, working on our equipment problem, had requisitioned several civilian sedans and hired drivers for them. This took care of getting our scientists around Paris, because the drivers knew the city and its environs. But EUCOM Headquarters had decreed that no unit should have civilian-type vehicles unless issued by and registered with that headquarters. The competition for cars was so great that there was little chance of getting more than one, at most two, allotted to us. Yet our fleet already boasted seven. George Eckman was faced with the problem of registering the vehicles or losing them. That meant, as in the case of all civilian vehicles in Paris, they would have to carry a registration number such as HQ ETOUSA-127.

With the help of a stencil prepared in a French shop, under the supervision of Lt. William Rosenberger, our vehicles suddenly acquired registration numbers like WD-A-3. George Eckman explained that the WD (War Department) and the A (ALSOS) were enough to confuse MP's and other curious people, particularly third-level staff officers.

Still, because of our need for additional men and wheels in combat areas, we forwarded to the War Department a request for 20 officers, 30 additional CIC agents and 50 enlisted men. As for more wheels, major items requested were armored vehicles. For example, I asked for two M-8's (six-wheeled light armored cars with 37-mm. guns in the turrets); two M-20's (light armored cars, six-wheeled, open at the top, with steel rings for mounting 50-caliber machine guns), and four jeeps with machine-gun mounts. Eventually our request for more personnel was acted upon favorably by the War Department. The armored vehicles, however, were disapproved and authorization for passenger vehicles substituted. Reason? The staff officers acting on the request decided that "passenger-type au-

tomobiles are more appropriate for a Mission." This was the last straw, but it showed how effective our code name was at least in the War Department.

Bob Blake appeared at the Nijmegen bridge after the heavy fighting was over. But the enemy had not given up hope of pushing back the American and British paratroopers. Even though they had taken a severe beating, the Nazis still had considerable fight left.

In the lingo of the fighting men, Bob Blake was a "carpet-bagger" and he knew it. He also knew how irritating it is to a soldier to have such guests come poking around. So it was with an air of apology that he approached the battalion commander whose men were defending the crossing.

Bucket in hand, Bob identified himself and showed his credentials.

"Sir, with your permission I'd like to go out on the bridge and get some Rhine water?"

"I don't say you're crazy, Captain. But those who sent you definitely are!"

Undaunted, Bob Blake continued "If the Colonel will not object, I'd like to go out on the bridge to get water from midstream as well as from both sides."

"Now I know that you're crazy, too. But go ahead. You've lived this long, so you must be lucky."

Carrying bucket and coiled rope, Bob started for the bridge. Every pair of eyes within visibility range followed "that damn fool captain." Bob felt like a condemned man walking the "last mile" to the chair. Wisecracks started as soon as the bucket began its first descent toward the river.

In Paris each bottle was carefully wrapped and marked for identification. As a gag, a liberated bottle of fine French wine was included in the shipment along with an attached note: *Johnny, give special attention to this.* One morning shortly afterward, George Eckman received a radio message from Washington: *Water negative. Wine positive.*

Further, the message directed us to obtain samples of wine from areas under Allied control. Could our Washington supervisors actually be serious? I talked it over with Sam Goudsmit; who told me that a certain amount of radioactivity usually could be found in wines or mineral waters. An effort

was made to clear the matter up with Washington but in effect we were told, "You have your orders. Carry them out."

Finally, realizing we would have to comply, I designated Wally Ryan and Russ Fisher to accomplish the mission. They were told to represent themselves as quartermaster officers preparing a study on the possible uses of wine by troops.

While our wine-tasters were on the road, it occurred to me that this would be a good time to get Washington off my back with regard to the British complaint about Alsos. There was only one way to handle that, I decided. Go to London and get to the bottom of the matter. And that's what I did—literally as well as figuratively.

Half a day of sleuthing, with the able assistance of Tony Calvert, disclosed that a supersecret meeting of technical intelligence groups was to be held in one of the rooms three levels underground at Whitehall. Special passes were required for attendance, but Tony and I managed to talk our way past the guards. Our special SHAEF passes helped. We marched into a large chamber where a number of British and American officers were discussing bacteriological warfare intelligence. They realized immediately that we did not belong there.

After the first shock had passed, the British officer presiding shot questions at me. "Colonel, who are you? How did you get in? What are you doing here?"

An American colonel of the Chemical Corps got up as though to take in hand the case of this American intruder. I beat him to the punch. "Gentlemen, I admit that I owe you an explanation. Well, I crashed this meeting in order to let you see me. I want you to assure yourselves that I'm not as mean-looking a chap as some say, and that my attitude matches my pleasant face." All present glared at me with resentment.

Nevertheless, I spoke on. "You see, gentlemen, I am Colonel Pash. I command the unit that calls itself Alsos."

At this point, their collective sense of humor started to get the best of my listeners. Some actually began to smile.

Thus encouraged, I continued. "Gentlemen, please believe that Alsos is not trying to race anyone to any intelligence objective. Our particular interests in no way conflict with yours. The thing is, when we enter an area we drive for our targets and worry about comfort later. However, I promise that if you'll tell me in advance which targets your teams intend to hit, I'll give you an hour's jump. Of course, I can't guarantee that Alsos won't be there first anyway—"

That provoked coughs, chair-shuffling and mutterings. But again smiles and laughs began to prevail, and the upshot was that the senior British officer invited me to stay.

I remained a few minutes, explaining that Alsos was after only certain strictly limited scientific objectives, and that we never invaded the broad technical fields that concerned other intelligence groups. I then told them that Alsos had no choice but to continue to operate as it had in the past. But I assured the group of officers of my wholehearted cooperation, inviting them to contact me when we could be of help or when they thought we were messing up their operations. "Please don't complain about me to Washington. They are looking for excuses to hang me, and I'm giving them plenty of same without your kind help."

That cracked up even the most phlegmatic of the Britons. After the meeting got back to order, we cordially discussed the complaint sent to Washington and I was asked to look on it as the unfortunate result of misunderstanding. Accordingly, I suggested that the originators of the complaint report to their governments that the matter had been cleared up.

My report to Washington touched only on the official aspects of the meeting and its constructive results. No doubt some heads in Washington shook in wonder. Pash had muddled through again. As a result of the contact—and, I am sure, to insure reaching targets on time—the British assigned personnel to Alsos, including investigators in the vital field of bacteriological warfare. Our successes in that area were recognized by Air Marshal Sir N. H. Bottomley, who, after VE day, sent Alsos the following note:

8 June, 1945

In my capacity as chairman of the British Interservice Subcommittee on Biological Warfare, I have seen the results of the investigations on German work in this field . . . These results, both negative and positive, are of much value and great credit is due to the investigating teams for uncovering so much. This credit goes firstly to the individual American investigators in your mission, and to the British investigators sponsored by CIO to whom you and your mission gave so much assistance. Without this ready help from you, and without the administrative assistance and encouragement you gave them, I am quite certain that they could not have

achieved what has been done. It was particularly good of you and your colleagues to give the British officers all the necessary facilities.

I should therefore like to thank you cordially on behalf of the British B.W. authorities for the help you have given to our investigators, so ensuring that, throughout, it was as it should be, a well-combined and very efficient Anglo-American effort.

Thus did Alsos weather the storm originating in London in the fall of 1944. At target after target, other technical intelligence groups would continue to learn that Kilroy and Alsos had already been there.

We still had the Peterson case hanging over our heads. The CIC were dragging their tails on our request that his secretary be brought in from Eupen.

The CIC detachment reported that the request was to be forwarded to the Twelfth Army Group Detachment, from where it would go to the First Army and thence through Corps Headquarters to the CIC Detachment to the Third Armored Division. Just trying to follow the path of the request was difficult enough, let alone keeping it from being buried in any of the "in" baskets I could visualize along the way. There seemed only one way to get the job completed in a hurry—disregard the chain of command and go into action ourselves. The Alsos way, in other words.

"I'm going after the girl," I announced to George Eckman. "If no complications develop, I'll leave early Wednesday morning. I'll call Colonel Harrison at Vittel and ask him to get Carl Fiebig and Nat Leonard back to Paris right away. They'll go with me."

Fiebig and Leonard reported the next day. They brought a somewhat disturbing message from Bob Blake. Apparently the T-Force commander, Lieutenant Colonel Pumpelli, was giving him a difficult time. Colonel Pumpelli was under the impression that he could control the timing and movements of our operations. For example, he expected the Alsos elements to wait for him to tell them when targets were under control and ready for exploitation. This could create difficulties for us in the 6th Army Group area. My hands were full

so the message was filed in my head, to be acted upon when I returned from Eupen.

Traveling two or three hundred miles a day had become routine for us. This time a lone Nazi fighter plane, probably on a reconnaissance mission, spotted us. Seeing an unconvoyed jeep on the road, the pilot must have gotten up on his left foot. He made two passes at us, causing Carl to run the jeep into some roadside brush. We escaped with only a few bruises acquired as we crossed a ditch. We arrived in Eupen, a city packed with tanks, trucks, jeeps and GI's. The Third Armored Division G-2 directed us to the CIC detachment. The CIC came up with the information that the Wessel family was in town and at the location we had indicated. The Detachment CO was a little surprised that an officer from Theater Headquarters would make such a long trip just to pick up a Belgian girl.

No sooner had the jeep stopped before the house than a girl opened the door—as if she had been waiting behind it in expectation of a caller. Carl Fiebig walked up to her with me and asked for Fraulein Wessel. The girl's nervousness was obvious. When she asked us to come back in the afternoon, my answer was to post a guard at the door—a CIC agent who had accompanied us. "Let no one out," I said to him. Then I walked inside, Carl and Leonard right behind me.

A grand piano occupied a corner of the living room. Looking around, one would judge that the Wessels were a comfortable if not wealthy family. A man identifying himself as Herr Wessel asked me to explain the purpose of my visit.

"I wish to speak to your daughter. I also intend to search your home."

He started to argue, but seeing my expression he changed his mind. He told me his family consisted of himself, his wife, a daughter and a son. The son was not in Eupen, he added. The daughter was the girl who had met us.

Nat Leonard remained with the family in the living room while Carl Fiebig and I checked the house. In a second-floor room we found two suitcases, which I opened. One contained men's clothing; the other, documents. Some of the papers were addressed to or referred to a person named Peterson.

Carl and I exchanged glances. Pay dirt! We kept on searching, finally coming to a locked door. We called Wessel. He confided, in a man-to-man tone, that they had a person staying in the house who was a close friend of his daughter. I

could hear alarm bells going off in my head. Wessel was trying to disarm me by pretending concern for the modesty of the girl. At my insistence that the door be opened, he refused on the grounds that he did not wish to embarrass the young couple. He was much surprised when I told him to have Peterson open the door or I would shoot the lock off.

Peterson, a frightened man, opened the door.

Carl Fiebig instructed the agent from the Third Division to hurry back to his detachment and bring two more agents in another jeep. Peterson was in a daze. We held him in a CIC detention room, and told the Wessels that because of their association with him we might have to visit them again.

Next morning, after many attempts, I got through on the phone to Sam Goudsmit and told him we had the man. Sam Goudsmit was confused. We had gone after a girl, hadn't we? "We've got her too," I informed him.

"Great work, Boris!" He wanted to be sure that Peterson would be brought to Paris. I assured him there would be no difficulty about that. We would start at the earliest opportunity. As for Miss Wessel, I asked Sam to have George Eckman arrange for sending a WAC to Eupen to bring the girl back.

Sam Goudsmit and his colleagues were licking their sleuthing chops when our first full-fledged Nazi "prisoner" was brought in, for information about the German atomic project was meager. I was hailed at 9 rue Pressbourg as a conquering hero. Sam had hoped that if we picked up Fraulein Wessel, he could start another chain of sleuthing events which might eventually lead us to Peterson. In one short operation we had wrapped up what was to have been a drawn-out job.

But the interrogation of Peterson, although lengthy and exhaustive, revealed nothing conclusive. Neither did the documents in the suitcase. Meanwhile, Sam had been hearing rumors that some German scientists possibly connected with the atomic project had their laboratories at the Hohenzollern Castle in the Wurtemberg area south of Stuttgart. Wurtemberg thus became a possible new target area for us. Nevertheless, the progress of Nazi atomic research still remained a big and disturbing question mark. This all made Strasbourg still more important as a target.

During my absence from Paris, Bob Blake had reported that the climate at the T-Force was not encouraging. His

evaluation of the commander was not very complimentary—self-important, inflexible and arbitrary. The situation required immediate correction if our Strasbourg operation was to proceed smoothly. Hence George Eckman had formally withdrawn our task force from the 6th Army Group T-Force.

But this was to be our first operation in the 6th Army Group area. I was most anxious that it work out well. Alsos relied on independence of action and mobility, yet as the Allied forces had slowed down and staffs had had a chance to stay longer at one spot, administrative regulations and restrictions had accumulated.

I reported to the Secretary of the General Staff (SGS), a position comparable to that of an office manager in a large concern. He promptly told me:

"Colonel Pash, we were expecting you. General Devers would like you to start working with General Harrison, our G-2. But the General expects to see you himself before you leave, and I think you can figure on tomorrow afternoon."

How different a tone from that of the Twelfth Army Group!

In the G-2 section, a tall, smiling officer with soft manners —Eugene L. Harrison—greeted me. Since it was nearing suppertime, he invited me to join him, explaining that it would give me an opportunity to meet some of the other section chiefs. Those first contacts reassured me. The atmosphere was one of friendliness and cooperation.

Gene Harrison was an "old" cavalry officer, had been commander of the Seventh Cavalry Regiment when horsepower had replaced horses. His friendly aid was later to contribute materially to Alsos successes. My meeting with General Devers next day was no less significant. He was the top military commander who was to give Alsos its greatest support and whom all Alsos men—scientists and military alike—learned to admire and respect. I gathered that he had been briefed by General Harrison, for he told me that he was acquainted with my mission—were my eyes to be opened five months later!—and that he would do everything he could to help me accomplish it.

"Of course, you realize, Colonel, that we are fighting a war. That comes first," he said. But I should not hesitate to come and see him when I thought it necessary, he added. General Harrison was to monitor our operations in the 6th

Army Group area. However, General Devers advised, I should call at Seventh Army headquarters and meet Col. William W. Quinn, the G-2, there, in whose Army area our targets would be located.

General Devers took me into the office of his Chief of Staff, Maj. Gen. David G. Barr, and introduced me. "Pash will be operating in our area," he said. "He has a vital intelligence mission from the War Department. Let's give him all the support we can."

Gene Harrison suggested that we lunch and then go to Epinal, about an hour's drive away, where Seventh Army headquarters was located.

Epinal, in the foothills along the western slopes of the Vosges Mountains, was bursting with our troops and vehicles. The narrow streets in the quarter where the Moselle flows through the town gave it a character I had not found elsewhere. We were in wine country—not too far, in fact, from the center of the Alsatian wine industry.

Colonel Quinn and his deputy, Col. Lou Perry, welcomed us warmly although they were much preoccupied. Brouveleures, a small town about ten miles east of Epinal, had just been taken by a regiment of the U.S. 45th Division, and other elements were pushing toward St. Die.

He reminded me of one of those tough football coaches called merciless drivers by opposing coaches but loved and respected by their players. Gene Harrison explained the purpose of our visit, mentioning that General Devers wanted me to receive all the help I needed to bring off the Strasbourg operation. Bill Quinn's comment was short but encouraging. "I'll see that you're taken care of." But he warned that the Germans were putting up strong resistance in the Sarrebourg and St. Die areas and the going to Strasbourg would be rough. Then he asked that I visit him again to acquaint him with any plans after they were fully jelled.

In Vittel, Gene Harrison's executive officer, Lt. Col. William Maulsby, gave me a thorough briefing on the tactical situation with emphasis on the Strasbourg area. Plans called for our old Paris friends, the Second French Armored Division, to spearhead the assault on the city.

This was to be the first operation in which, instead of playing it by ear, Alsos could count on preliminary coordination with the major field command. The fact that the famous

Second French Armor was to be the assaulting force also stimulated my desire to avoid any hitches. Our operational design would have to be perfect! Sam Goudsmit was to select the scientists who, with the required operational personnel, would constitute our second echelon. As soon as Strasbourg had fallen, George would dispatch that second echelon to Vittel. If necessary, captured documents and personnel could be sent back there. We reviewed once more the priority in which we were to go after targets. Dr. Fleischman headed the list. Dr. C.F. von Weizsacker was next, then a couple of other nuclear scientists, Dr. Von Haagen, the Nazi BW man —and finally, several specialists in various fields.

Our list of target laboratories was developed in a similar manner. It was my intention to have the T-Force seal the laboratories as soon as it entered the city and hold them for us while we went after the personnel targets, which had to be hit first. Addresses had been obtained from university catalogs and documents, from telephone directories and correspondence.

Our preparation for this operation was very thorough, so much so that it afforded us a few laughs. Thus, while reviewing Washington material intended to help us identify personnel targets, we came on the following:

> Subject had German measles in his youth, visited the United States and had an unfavorable opinion of American women, was a gay student when attending the University and liked to indulge in beer-drinking jousts; was operated on for polyps in both nostrils and has an atrophied right testicle.

On 10 November, Dick Ham, Russ Fisher, Lieutenant Commander Gilfillan and Ralph Cerame reported into the Paris office. This gave George Eckman exceptionally fine operational men and gave Sam Goudsmit equally good additional strength in the scientific field.

Within a couple of days after my return, Carl Fiebig, Gerry Beatson and I were on the road again, headed back for Vittel. The weather was deteriorating rapidly as winter approached.

Before going to the T-Force, I stopped at Vittel. Our conflict with the T-Force commander remained of some concern

although it had not come as a surprise to General Harrison, who was well acquainted with the strengths and weaknesses of the T-Force staff. In all previous operations the T-Force had done fine work. Gene Harrison was anxious that our presence should not affect adversely this situation. He decided to go with me to Lunsville and clear up the matter.

Colonel Maulsby brought in the latest information from the Seventh Army. The Strasbourg schedule would be set back. Not only were our troops encountering stiff resistance in the Vosges Mountains, but the Nazis were exerting much pressure on our force advancing in its push toward the Saverne Gap, the gateway to Strasbourg.

At Lunaville, then, ten or twelve miles from enemy lines, Gene Harrison introduced me to Colonel Pumpelli and the key members of his staff. Gene then made it clear that General Devers approved my going into Strasbourg entirely independent of the T-Force or any other unit, that the Seventh Army was aware of this, and that General Devers' directive was that Colonel Pumpelli and the tactical commanders give me whatever support I needed. Since my mission was known to General Devers and his staff, there was no need for anyone else to be briefed. This did not sit well with Pumpelli.

I decided not to return to Vittel with Gene but to remain at Lunsville. My hope was that through informal contact, friendlier relations with Pumpelli could be developed.

In the evening a captain came in with an invitation from Pumpelli for me to join him and his senior staff officers in a poker game. That particular branch of applied mathematics had always appealed to me. Besides, this would be a good opportunity to get better acquainted with both the T-Force commanders.

The reference to senior "staff" officers had not escaped me. Sitting in the game, apart from Pumpelli, were Major Ewell, the exec, and Major Hunt, the operations officer. Evidently at T-Force headquarters a distinction was made between field- and company-grade officers. I filed away a suggestion made by the captain while extending the invitation. He had advised that I cache some carfare change with my men, suggesting that I'd be taken to the cleaners. Thus put on my mettle, I made a tactical error. I raked in some sizable pots from the T-Force top brass and ended the night well ahead, which did not improve my standing with Pumpelli.

Back in Paris we awaited the signal to report to Vittel. Our operational task force, consisting of five men in two jeeps with trailers, was to move out at a moment's notice.

On 20 November we received word that our troops were not moving as fast as initially anticipated. The fall of Strasbourg was not expected for about ten days. Moulin Rouge—here we come! Alsos had never mounted a proper assault on Paris night life. Maybe this would be our chance. . . .

But on 22 November, Bryan Conrad flashed that the Germans were beginning to pull back and our men were pushing through the Vosges Mountains. Back on alert for us. The lull was over.

CHAPTER XVI

A Bubble—Not a Bomb

"Tell Boris to get up here as soon as possible," was the phone message George Eckman got from General Harrison.

We moved out within an hour. Taking the Nancy Highway, we arrived that night at Saarbourg. There we ran into our first difficulty. The Germans were counterattacking north of the city. Phalsbourg, which the Nazis abandoned that day and which was in our path on the road to Strasbourg, was being held only shakily. Therefore it was decided to spend the night in Saarbourg. The city was in darkness. But because our troops were occupied with the enemy, we tried ourselves to locate billets for the night rather than bother with any unit. The Germans had been driven out only a couple of days before. Their artillery was still livening things up by occasionally lobbing in shells. Bob Blake found an abandoned two-story house that looked substantial enough.

We moved into the courtyard, unhitched the trailers, and left the jeeps by the gate ready to pull out at a moment's notice. Nat Leonard took the first guard shift. We could do little to help if the Germans broke through, but we needed a lookout to warn us in the event our troops started a withdrawal. When a reversal of fortune occurs in combat, usually no one knows or cares about the presence of small independent units on special missions. Such a unit can easily be left behind, unaware of the withdrawal of main forces. I had a talk with an infantry battalion commander and was assured there was no immediate danger. Yet as I returned to our shelter, enemy artillery became active again. Bob Blake moved our billets from the first floor to the basement.

My three men were sitting in an inch of water in the damp, cold cellar. I couldn't repress a chuckle. They had donned their heavy coats and wrapped their heads in scarfs.

On their feet were the enormous flat shoes woven from straw that German sentries wear in cold weather. Playing cards, each looked like a cross between a peasant from Lower Slobovia and a scarecrow. Additional straw shoes had been placed under their feet to keep them dry. They seemed to be enjoying themselves. They were waiting for me to join them, they said, in a Thanksgiving dinner.

Two candles on the table provided the only light we could risk, and that because the Germans had left blackout blinds on the narrow cellar windows. In this environment, our K rations were a treat, particularly the hot coffee prepared by Gerry Beatson. Each man stood an hour's watch while the rest played bridge. Later we tried to get some sleep on some wooden tables and benches. About three A.M., an artillery shell landed in the courtyard, beating Carl's alarm clock by fifteen minutes. Gerry Beatson came running to report that the shell had hit one of our trailers.

Fortunately, our supplies were equally divided between the two trailers. We lost half of everything rather than all of one or two items. We braced for more shells, but all the others fell on the northern part of the city. We pulled out of the courtyard no longer looking like the Lower Slobovia militia.

We tooled down the narrow streets into a new adventure. Leaving Saarbourg, I realized that once more we were sitting ducks for enemy snipers.

Heading toward Phalsbourg, we met a staff officer from the 45th Infantry Division who told us that the Germans were still pressing just north of that city and counterattacking in the direction of Saarbourg. Our infantry was rushing along the highway toward Saverne, where the armored cavalry was mopping up. Strasbourg was about to be entered by forward elements of the French Second Armored Division.

Since our mission was to reach Strasbourg rather than to observe the clearing of the Saverne gap, I decided to move a little to the south and take the mountain road over the Dabo Pass to Wasselonne and thence to Strasbourg. This would permit bypassing Phalsbourg and Saverne, but it did present a serious danger if any enemy pockets had been left behind to be mopped up by following elements.

Leaving the flat area of the Moselle countryside and reaching the winding road leading to the mountains, we received our first alarm. Staring us in the face as we turned a corner was the long, slender barrel of a German 88—luckily a cripple.

We had to slow down and take the many curves with extreme caution. The thick foliage, adorning the hills in their fall robes of splendor, showed varied shades of red. We resented the beauty. It could conceal a vicious enemy. Rounding a turn we saw, fairly in the middle of the road, a French tank which must have been rolling along without realizing its danger when the shell from a concealed 88 tore a gaping hole in its front armor plate. Subsequent shells had finished it off. Just beyond it was a dead mate which had moved up to take revenge. It had hugged the trees on the right-hand side of the road, using the foliage as a partial screen as it had sneaked up to get its guns into position to swing around. Just a little beyond the curve, masterfully camouflaged, was the culprit 88 which had got both tanks and in turn had been blasted, probably by a third member of the tank team.

About halfway up the climb, we got a second scare. The front jeep, carrying Bob Blake and Carl Fiebig, was advancing at a crawl when it suddenly halted. Both boys hit the ground and took cover. Bob Blake signaled that an 88 was ahead of us. We dismounted, deployed and cautiously began approaching the gun on foot. Reaching it, we confronted the crew—all dead. Apparently a foot patrol had surprised them. The gun was damaged only at the breech.

Entering the pass, we encountered a few French soldiers standing beside a disabled tank, probably left there as a checkpoint. The French troops were a great bracer for my morale. The tension of spending two hours cautiously covering some twelve or fifteen miles had been wearing down us Alsos heroes.

The French assured us there was slight likelihood of our running into difficulty on the downward drive. We started off at a somewhat faster pace. Just around a turn we sighted the small mountain community of Dabo, a picturesque hamlet which, from the appearance of two hotels and several pensions, was a tourist attraction.

Soon we reached the high point of the pass, marking the border between Alsace and Lorraine. We started downward and within a mile reached another small community. From it we had a magnificent view of the Mossig River valley. But even from that elevation it was easy to see how much war had ravaged the natural beauty of the countryside.

Following the river into the great Alsatian plain, at last we hit the Saverne highway at Wasselonne. Immediately we were

in the midst of noise, dust, men and vehicles of war all moving with great purpose. The situation in Strasbourg remained touchy we were told. Although French armored patrols had entered the city, Germans retained a foothold on the west bank of the Rhine at the Kehl bridge and bitter fighting was still in progress. We took a break to decide our next action.

It was about eight o'clock in the morning. I was anxious to get into the city and to our immediate top objective—Dr. Fleischmann. After the men had opened K rations I briefed them on a slight change in plans. Carl Fiebig and Gerry Beatson would accompany me to Fleischmann's home in one jeep. Bob Blake and Nat Leonard would try to locate an element of the T-Force, pick up a couple of jeeploads of men, and meet us at the Fleischmann place. After the research we had devoted to the operation, we felt we could move about in Strasbourg as readily as in our home towns.

It was lucky that we had been able to see a little of the country while moving down the east slope of the Vosges. Once we joined the traffic on the Saverne-Strasbourg highway, we were caught in the dust and smoke of what seemed like all the armor of the Allies. Finally we came to a checkpoint where excited Frenchmen were trying to bring a little order into the stampede of steel monsters. Being so small, our jeeps failed to draw attention and we slipped ahead of the parade. Passing under a railroad trestle, we waved back to Bob Blake.

Instead of making contact with the T-Force and mounting a multi-team operation, circumstances forced me to take Carl Fiebig because of his language facility and Gerry Beatson to provide fire power support, and to hit the No. 1 target, while Bob Blake contacted the T-Force and organized the overall operation.

We purposely stayed clear of the narrow, crooked streets in the center of town. We did not want to get caught in any traffic jams, the creation of which seemed the favorite pastime of the French when operating a vehicle. We circled the inner city, keeping the magnificent cathedral to our right.

Directly before us stretched the magnificent facade of the main university building. Its colonnaded center section with broad stone steps leading to a recessed entrance would have struck us as a noble sight under different conditions.

No French troops were in sight. This disturbed me. The

constant firing and the lack of troops could encourage any German units in the section to assume the French and Americans were not being too successful. But we reached Fleischmann's home without incident.

We stopped in front of what once had been an attractive two-story stone house with the high gabled roof so characteristic of Strasbourg. An aerial bomb had destroyed the attractiveness, as well as half the roof and a corner of the building. Gerry took a position in the front doorway while Carl Fiebig and I walked in cautiously, making our way through a cluttered ground floor. Our carbines were slung over our shoulders and our .45's were in our hands. The damaged appearance of the building did not lead us to expect to find anyone inside, but I hated to admit that our dash had drawn a blank. We climbed to the second floor and found the confusion worse. However, two of the rooms on the side opposite the damaged section were unexpectedly tidy. Gerry called up that a woman from the next house was trying to tell him something. Carl went down to talk to her while I continued searching.

The two neat rooms looked like someone's living quarters. In one was a bed. The other, quite large, contained a round table and a couple of chairs. Near the window were an ornate oak desk and a comfortable leather chair.

Carl returned to report that the neighbor woman had told him the occupant of this house, whose name she did not know, had left Strasbourg two weeks ago.

"Bring her up here," I said.

She was frightened when she came into the room. I tossed her a piece of bread I had found on the table. Then I lifted an egg and crushed it into the saucer.

"This egg is not two weeks old," I said. "And that bread is not stale. Now you've told one lie. Don't tell any more or I shall have to become unpleasant with you. When did you last see Dr. Fleischmann?"

"He was here yesterday and left in the afternoon," she replied fearfully.

If the man had fled, it would not be easy to find him in a city of more than 150,000.

While I was thinking it over, Bob Blake drove up with several jeeploads of soldiers. He posted guards to keep everyone out of the building, including Allied personnel. I confined the woman to her home pending my order for her release. The

remaining soldiers waited in the jeeps. The five members of our unit sat around the table to work out our next move.

"Let's not lose any time getting after the other targets," I told them. "It's dangerous in the streets after dark, so I want all of you to report to the T-Force barracks at 1930. Carl will stay and help me. I'm going after Fleischmann."

When the others left, Carl and I began a systematic search of Fleischmann's apartment. Letters and other papers were found in the large desk, all neatly stacked in strict chronological order and the latest one dated only a few days before the capture of the city. The center drawer on the righthand side contained envelopes bearing cancellations. They were directly related to letters in the corresponding drawer on the other side and were stacked in the same chronological sequence. The most recent Strasbourg cancellation was dated 22 November. A brief inspection showed that much of the correspondence had been with persons whose names appeared on our target lists. There were also some place names that had already crept into our files.

We found several photographs. Carl brought in the woman once again and showed them to her.

"Which is Dr. Fleischmann?" I asked.

Without hesitation, she pointed to one. Now we had something to go by. Next I asked her about his friends and visitors. She didn't know many but did give us the name of a professor at the university.

"Carl," I said, "you can tell her that she'll be continued on restriction in her home. When you take her there cut the telephone wires. That will keep her from warning anyone."

I went over my list of German scientists and found the name of Fleischmann's visitor fairly well down the list. But I decided he was to be my next target.

We spent most of the early afternoon searching Fleischmann's rooms and packing his documents. About two o'clock, Gerry Beatson returned and reported that he had seized the two key laboratories, leaving a squad of soldiers in each. I left a sealed envelope for Bob Blake or Nat Leonard with a message to the effect that we were going after Fleischmann's friend.

The man's apartment was quickly located. There we were closer to the Rhine where the military situation was less certain. That became evident when we entered the building ahead of a sprinkle of bullets. It was difficult to tell from

which direction they were coming or who was firing at us.

A pleasant middle-aged woman answered Carl Fiebig's knock. She was a bit startled at seeing us but invited us in with some grace. We walked into the apartment carefully. I hoped it would not be necessary to use my .45, and it was not. Our quarry greeted us with a puzzled look, rose to his feet. I gave him no hint of our visit to Fleischmann's home. He was led to believe that my interest in the university staff resulted from associations in the United States and curiosity to know how all had fared. As we talked, I heard my men below replying to gunfire. This could mean that the enemy was moving in. The woman became nervous but I thought I could read malicious hope in the professor's eyes.

Carl went down to learn what was going on. Returning, he reported that the hostile fire had been coming from some distance away and at first our men had not replied. Then slugs had started to fly from houses only a couple of blocks off, and our men had peppered the area. I returned to interrogating the professor, but in what was intended to be a casual manner he asked if I would permit him to go to the hospital the next day.

"Don't you feel well?"

"It's just that I do a little of my work there," he replied.

I tried hard not to show any reaction. But I had immediately caught the scent.

"We have no interest in hospitals," I said, "other than to see they are not harmed. You are free to go there but not before tomorrow noon." I intended to take measures to stop him from contacting the hospital before that time, including ripping out the telephone wires leading into the house.

The firing had stopped when Carl and I joined the men outside. Leaving guards behind we drove to the port, now occupied by the T-Force. We found Bob Blake and Nat Leonard getting things in order for dining. An unpainted kitchen table had been placed in the center of the room. A couple of chairs and three boxes completed our furniture. The rations, augmented by some liberated Alsatian Riesling, were placed on the table with a couple of candles.

Looking at the daring, hard-riding boys around me, I wondered whether they were the same in private life. On my left in a combat windbreaker with knitted collar, a knitted helmet drawn over his ears, his face showing the effects of the last three days of tense movement, sat Bob Blake. An MIT grad-

uate, a petroleum engineer, he was industriously digging chopped beef out of a tin can. Next to him sat Nat Leonard, whom his New York students never would have recognized as their French teacher. A dirty tan clothed his face, the result of sun and road grime. Our youngster, Gerry Beatson, was too busy putting away crackers and coffee to be worried about the Home Finance Corporation, of which he had been an agent before entering the Army. Wearing a combat windbreaker, Carl Fiebig sat bareheaded, a long way from his furniture business in Michigan. Four capable, courageous, imaginative American soldiers making military history.

My radio report to Paris that evening was not as encouraging as Sam Goudsmit had anticipated. Our chief scientist had placed high hopes on this operation, and the failure to pick up at least one scientist on our priority list was keenly disappointing to him. The only positive information about Von Haagen was that he had left Strasbourg several days before. We had seized his apartment, located in a three-story building on Quai Kleber, and had placed a guard there. His laboratory was under guard. The Bugatti-Trippel and Mathis plants also were in our hands and under guard. We were sure Fleischmann and some members of his staff were in the city and hoped to find them soon—so went my report.

Sitting around the table, the five of us reviewed the situation. It was not encouraging. The Second French Armored Division had chased the Germans out of Strasbourg but was having a hard time keeping them out. For that reason I considered out of the question any postponement in running down our targets, hostile fire or not.

The remarks of the scientist so anxious to get to the Strasbourg Hospital seemed to me a good clue. Early on the morning of 26 November, having augmented our group by two men from the T-Force, we drove into the spacious hospital grounds. The hospital covered so large an area that after going into the main building, I realized our small group could not make an effective search—particularly if someone there wished to evade us. The men were therefore instructed to appear indifferent and relaxed, remaining in the jeeps while Carl Fiebig and I went to the director's office. We entered over the vigorous protests of a receptionist and a secretary.

Carl Fiebig was having a hard time translating, because I wasn't giving the man an extra second to think.

"Your hospital will receive all consideration under interna-

tional conventions—if you keep it a hospital," I said. "That's up to you."

Again came the display of indignation. "I do not understand you, *Herr. . . .*"

"Herr Oberst," I said. Then, to Carl Fiebig, "Tell him to keep his hands on the desk and away from the phone or any buzzer." The man moved as though to lift the telephone.

He did not seem to know whether he should keep up the front he had first adopted or give in. I could see the uncertainty in his face and decided to try a little bluff.

"You ask consideration for the hospital. Do you know there will be serious consequences for you and your staff if you are misleading the Allied Military Command?

"You have one activity here which has nothing to do with the sick. I want to know just where Dr. Fleischmann and his people have their laboratory."

I thought the man would faint. Then he feigned ignorance and tried to stall for time. I sent for Gerry Beatson. While waiting, I pointed to a plan of the hospital on the wall.

"I'm giving you three minutes to show me the location of Fleischmann's laboratory," I roared. "Otherwise—"

I did not have to finish the sentence. Thoroughly frightened, the director pointed to a building on the map just as Carl and Gerry walked in.

"How many scientists work there?" I demanded.

He checked some records and told me that eleven men comprised Fleischmann's staff. The building he had indicated, detached from the others, was located in a corner of the grounds.

My next move was designed to conceal our weakness in numbers.

"Carl, have guards posted about the hospital area." Then, turning again to the director, "You are to remain here. My men will stay with you. Mr. Beatson has orders to stop you from communicating with anyone."

We drove our jeeps into a position from which we could observe the two-story building housing the laboratory. In the center of the side facing us was an entrance. Bob Blake drove around the building and determined that there were no other doors and that the windows of the ground floor were barred. I decided to post Nat Leonard and one of the T-Force men at the door with the usual instructions to admit anyone who attempted to enter but allow no one to leave. Bob Blake, Carl

Fiebig, the second T-Force man and I entered the building. I took over the main office and ordered Bob and Carl to round up all occupants and herd them in.

None of the Germans inside realized what was taking place. Men and women in white coats filtered confusedly into the room. One of the last to enter was a tall man who kept asking questions. When told to sit down and await instructions, he protested loudly, cited the Geneva rules and began advising the others on how to act and what to say. Carl Fiebig, who did the interpreting, happened to be out of the room. The tall trouble-maker did not realize that I knew enough German to understand what he was saying. I pointed my finger at him and barked, *"Setzen sich und sprechen Sie keine Worte."* Which was my poor German for, "Sit down and shut up."

Bob Blake and Carl Fiebig returned to report that the building was a self-sustaining unit with a bathroom and kitchen. Beds had been placed in offices to convert them into living quarters.

I pointed to the tall fellow. "Bob, isolate that one in a room. If there's a phone there, tear it out." Then, having recognized him by the photograph in my possession, I demanded "Are you Fleischmann?"

Startled, he admitted that he was.

"You and the others," I said, "are in the custody of the United States Army. You will not be harmed if you follow my orders. Captain Blake will be in charge here. Your administrative officer will report to him the extent of your food supply and your personal needs. No one will leave the building without his permission. You will be held responsible for any destruction of equipment or papers."

The group was then searched and dismissed. All keys were picked up and the study room, offices and laboratory rooms were locked. Carl Fiebig was to mingle with the group and learn as much as possible about their organization. Nat Leonard and the other two men were to assist Blake.

The group included not only Fleischmann but others on our list, so that we now had six of the seven we were after. Von Weizsacker was the only important one missing. Before leaving, I wanted to be sure that Fleischmann would not find means to coach his colleagues on some trumped-up story. The only way to do this was to lock him up. And the only lock-up was the local jail, which an MP detachment of the

Seventh Army had taken over. Fleischmann hotly resented being incarcerated.

Since the director was of no further interest, Gerry Beatson was contacted by phone and told to rejoin us.

The rest of us reached Quai Kleber late in the afternoon and formally took over Von Haagen's apartment to serve as our base. Gerry Beatson was dispatched to T-Force headquarters with a request that a squad from the Combat Engineer Battalion report to Blake at the hospital. The T-Force man who remained with us was placed on guard within the locked gates of the apartment building while Carl Fiebig and I inspected the apartment itself.

The large building was ideally suited for us because it provided comfortable living quarters and at the same time happened to be nicely arranged from the security standpoint. The front faced the street, with smaller buildings forming a right angle at one end.

Carl told me that an old couple who had remained in the otherwise deserted apartment building, while of German origin, were true Alsatians and he considered them reliable. Structures that normally could be expected to be occupied by Allied personnel were the ones the retreating Nazis favored for booby-trapping. The one we had just taken over belonged in that category. Hence we were somewhat apprehensive and wanted to reassure ourselves before settling down. Von Haagen had left his apartment key with the old man. Inside, we made a thorough check. We found nothing alarming. Von Haagen's combined library and den was the final room to be checked. We intended to use it as our office. But immediate changes would be required in the decorations. On the mantel, which was decorated with red, yellow and black bunting, there was a photograph of Hitler.

A glass-enclosed bookcase stood against one wall. Carl and Gerry quickly surveyed the walls and furniture, the flooring under the rug, the bookcase. As one of them touched the bookcase a faint ticking sounded. We all froze and held our breath. The ominous sound seemed to pound in my ears. My two experts dashed for the door to the next room. I was trapped on the side farthest from the door. A second later I was thinking how fortunate that the big armchair behind which I found myself was so solidly built and heavily padded. A few seconds later Carl Fiebig stuck his head through the door and asked, "Are you all right, Chief?"

I risked a look from behind the chair to survey the bookcase. What I saw made me let out a guffaw. The boys came in cautiously and stared in the direction my finger pointed. Hanging on a nail projecting from the bookcase was a metal thermometer, which had started to swing when the bookcase had been touched. The metal, scraping against the side of the bookcase, had created the rhythmic ticking that had frightened us.

Blake and Leonard came in a few minutes later. The laboratory and its personnel had been turned over to the detachment from the T-Force. We washed off several days' accumulation of dust and grime and assembled in the living room to wait for dinner. The old couple upstirs had agreed to cook a meal for us.

But the relaxation did not last long. Carl Fiebig returned with disquieting news: the Nazis were not ready to call it quits in the world center of *pâté de foie gras*. At headquarters he had heard that the French were not sure they could hold Strasbourg, and that expected changes in the tactical situation would require giving up the Bugatti-Trippel plant. We had to act immediately.

I sent Gerry Beatson to the plant with instructions to try and hold it with a platoon of Combat Engineers.

"Gerry, if you see you can't hold the plant, destroy the model on the target list."

The model was an important target for the Navy. While we were under instructions not to destroy or remove any equipment without permission from SHAEF, I did not know what effect the plant research would have on the progress of the war if used by the enemy. I did not want any item, once captured by us, to fall back into German hands. Immediately an urgent message was sent to SHAEF requesting authority to destroy or remove certain captured items in the event of our withdrawal.

On 27 November, the French relieved the pressure by regrouping and launching a counteroffensive.

Upon rejoining us, Gerry reported that for a short period of time his "command" was the only force between the advancing Nazi and Strasbourg. "German patrols appeared," he continued, "but were too cautious and made no attempt to go beyond the plant. We were prepared to blow up the plant."

Next morning we visited the apartment of Dr. Von Weiz-

sacker, who had managed to remove himself and his belongings from Strasbourg without a trace.

Von Weizsacker had taken everything with him but the pot-bellied stove that remained in the living room. Apparently he had received early warning of the imminent fall of the city. The pot-bellied stove was crowned by a nine-foot section of exposed metal chimney that disappeared into the wall. The stove looked perfect for burning papers. It was gone over thoroughly but yielded only ashes. But a piece of paper was found caught in the joint where the chimney was attached to the wall. Encouraged by this, we took the chimney apart, found other unburned scraps. All were carefully marked and placed in an envelope to be turned over to Sam Goudsmit. A study of these scraps by our scientists a few days later disclosed important information. In Von Weizsacker's office we also found many valuable papers.

Our next report to Paris summarized all phases of our operations against the Strasbourg targets, and brought immediate reaction. We were told that on the evening the message arrived, the men at the Royal Monceau drank a toast to "Pash's zoo." This arose from the report that in one of Von Haagen's laboratories we had found a donkey, four sheep, four monkeys, several pigs and numerous guinea pigs and mice.

Our scientists soon joined us in Strasbourg. Bob Furman and Lt. Tony Biot, a Navy physicist, had already arrived. Sam Goudsmit and Fred Wardenberg reported two days later. Sam was somewhat embarrassed to find that the eminent Fleischmann was imprisoned.

"But he's a scientist like me. He's not a soldier or a—a criminal!"

"That remains to be seen. In any case, he was uncooperative. He tried to talk to his gang after I ordered everyone to keep quiet. If he could manage to communicate with any of that crew he might mess up our investigation, and that's why I locked him up. Sam, he's no more or less than an enemy, and he showed it by his behavior."

Sam wasted no more time and immediately began the interrogation of Fleischmann and his cronies.

With a map of southern Germany on the table, I jotted down the names and locations of certain places and addresses mentioned in documents found at the hospital, in Weisacker's office and in Fleischmann's laboratory. The communities

of Stadtilm in Thuringia as well as Haigerloch, Hechingen, Bisingen, and Teilfingen in Wurtemberg, were mentioned in those papers. References to offices in a textile factory, the cave in Haigerloch, Otto Hahn's laboratory in Teilfingen served to pinpoint future targets.

Our scientific sleuths were more than usually agitated by the material probed although they would be the last to admit it. After a while, I heard Sam Goudsmit exclaim, "We've got it!"

"I know we have it," I remarked. "But do they?"

The two scientists were the only ones who knew to what I was referring. They smiled, and Sam Goudsmit's eyes were wide with excitement.

"No, no!" he said. "That's it. They don't!" The scientists remained up far into the night, poring over the papers.

A larger contingent of Alsos scientists arrived the next day, and within four days we had Capt. Bill Cromartie and Carlo Henze, the bacteriological warfare experts, going over Von Haagen's laboratories and experimental stations. Included among their targets was a laboratory in the prison of the old Fort Franchecki and one in the Natzweiler concentration camp, where Von Haagen was reported to have conducted a secret medical project for the Nazi Air Force. Captured documents revealed that he had used displaced persons from Eastern Europe in some of his experiments. More than ever, Von Haagen became an Alsos "wanted man." Before we were through, he was taken into custody.

The Navy group assembled in force, led by Captain Roop. It included Commander den Hartog and Lieutenants Hart and Holmes. Henry Reed of NASA also came up with the Navy group. There was a great deal for these men to do because Alsos had struck pay dirt in Strasbourg.

Interrogation of the captured scientists, study of the seized documents and inspection of the laboratories took several days. But the two days during which Sam Goudsmit, Fred Wardenberg and Bob Furman worked on our priority interest were as important to our top leaders and to the British as any other phase of the war. It was our Strasbourg operation which disclosed that it was unlikely that the Nazi could unleash an atom bomb in the near future.

Thus Alsos exploded the Nazi super-weapon myth that had so alarmed Allied leaders. The fact that a German atom bomb was not an immediate threat was probably the most

significant single piece of military intelligence developed throughout the war. Alone, that information was enough to fully justify Alsos.

We wanted to get the news off without delay to Paris for relay to Washington and London. With the Strasbourg situation still somewhat shaky and communications uncertain, it was thought best for Sam Goudsmit and me to report to General Devers at Vittel; from that headquarters the message could be sent directly to General Eisenhower.

Commenting later on the review of the voluminous records and other material collected by us at Strasbourg, General Groves wrote General Bissell as follows: "This is the most complete, dependable and factual information we have received bearing upon the nature and extent of the German atomic effort. . . ." On 22 March, 1945, General Bissell forwarded to me a copy of General Groves' memorandum and in turn commended us. In his letter he stated that ". . . the continued success of the Alsos operations in the European theater, together with the initiative and aggressive action displayed by mission personnel, is a source of gratification to the Division."

Dinner in Strasbourg on the eve of our departure for Vittel was a miniature banquet. Sam Goudsmit and I presided. Cognac and cocktails put us in the proper mood. The feast was served by Frau Rilda, our elderly housekeeper. She did a superb job with the aid of certain extra rations supplied by the best "moonlight requisitioner" in the ETO—our own Carl Fiebig.

In the morning Sam Goudsmit and I started for Vittel. There we would meet Dr. Vannevar Bush, who had come up from Paris to get the results of the investigations. General Devers, ready to get off the formal report to General Eisenhower, was also waiting.

A jeep has many uses and one of them is to serve as a mobile conference room. Because there was so much to talk over, I drove and Sam Goudsmit sat in the assistant driver's seat—with Gerry Beatson on the "shelf," as our men referred to the back seat. "Assistant driver" is not an empty title. It calls for active participation, especially in bad weather. And unkind indeed were the elements on the day of our trip to Vittel. As rain and slush covered the windshield, the assistant

driver had to work a hand wiper for each side of the glass. But gallons of mud were thrown up by passing vehicles, rendering effective use of the wipers impossible. Having experienced that difficulty in the past, we had introduced an innovation—large rubber syringes liberated from the Strasbourg Hospital. Rubber tubing was attached to them, with the ends stuck through a hole drilled in the frame of the windshield. When the syringes were squeezed, water squirted over the outside of the glass. This permitted washing off the mud by working the hand wiper. In spite of Sam's arduous labors with the syringes, we were able to talk over many problems during the 120-mile trip.

Sam and his colleagues were reasonably certain that the Nazis did not have the bomb. As Sam kept reiterating that belief, I could not help thinking: *Alsos has exploded the biggest intelligence bombshell of the war!* Now every American and British leader in the know would sleep more comfortably. But any temptation for me to let down on that account was quickly dispelled by Sam.

In the first place, being a scientist, he warned that there was always the outside possibility that he could be wrong. So there could be no let-up in going after information—which, it was fervently to be hoped, would corroborate his findings. Secondly, while it is true that Fleischmann's documents plus interrogation of the captured scientists indicated that in all probability, in November of 1944, the Nazis had not progressed in atomic development as far as our own project had early in 1941—that was not to say they could not find some application for their atomic material. They still had a thousand tons of refined uranium ore they had evacuated from Belgium. They still had laboratories and a secret atomic pile with which presumably they were still experimenting. It was up to Alsos to locate the missing material, the Nazi pile, the experimenters and all pertinent documents, in order to end the German atomic effort once and for all—and also in order that they should not fall into Soviet hands!

During the ride, Sam explained that information gleaned in Strasbourg had enabled his scientific detectives to more specifically identify German scientists associated with atomic research and classify their efforts in more definite fashion. This knowledge would determine our choice of targets.

Thus, Werner Heisenberg would be our first priority. It had been learned that he, with such other outstanding nuclear

scientists as Otto Hahn and Max von Laue, were in the Hechingen-Teilfingen area of Wurtemberg. Von Weizsacker was believed to have joined Heisenberg. Walther Gerlock and a Dr. Diebner were engaged in research near Berlin. A Dr. Harteck, of Hamburg, also was important because of his research with heavy water. Thus we had three areas to hit, all still well ahead of our front lines. So it is not surprising that during that ride I casually mentioned a paradrop into Wurtemberg. The only reaction was Gerry's "Geez!"

Sam airily remarked that the I. G. Farben plants at Ludwigshaven and Mannheim would be next on our schedule. Then would come the Physics Institute and its chief, Dr. Walter Bothe, in Heidelberg. However, it was my impression that in Sam's mind, Alsos would merely take these in stride on the way to the main objectives: Hechingen and Teilfingen.

After the war's end there was to be some criticism of the eagerness with which we went after our remaining objectives. After all, had not the Strasbourg operation indicated that the Nazis were not in the same league with our scientists when it came to atomic research? As I sat beside him on that ride to Vittel, I found it difficult to tell just what was going on in the complex mind of our "atom spinner"—as I frequently called Sam Goudsmit because he had shared the Nobel physics prize with Dr. Harold Urey for their work in 1952, widely referred to as "atom spinning." There is no doubt that by November, 1944 he had been well bitten by the intelligence bug and the compulsion to go on with the chore was strong in him. But events were to prove him absolutely right in arguing that, if anything, the necessity for forceful and rapid action had increased. Not one Alsos operation was ever conducted in the absence of a need for it.

Dr. Bush, America's wartime science chief, joined us at Vittel. The two scientists discussed the findings of our Strasbourg operation. It wasn't too long before Sam Goudsmit turned to me and said, "Boris, he agrees that our results are great. We can send a dilly of a report to Washington."

General Devers, unfortunately, had been obliged to go into the field before our arrival. So I gave the message to Gene Harrison. At last the information so anxiously sought by all top Allied officials was on its way to General Eisenhower and, through the Pentagon, to the President.

With our key operation a matter of history, Alsos could have been expected to receive a breather and, like combat

units after a hard fight, to be pulled out of the line for rest. I must confess that the opportunity to lounge around the mess hall of the big headquarters and discuss current events in a relaxed and detached atmosphere was most tempting. I made the best of it. Gerry Beatson was with his CIC buddies (he or Carl Fiebig had at least one friend in every CIC detachment we ran into), no doubt telling them some tall tales. No wonder Alsos was becoming a notorious organization.

Duty called—yelled, in fact—so my Vittel stay was cut short. But I found Strasbourg not so bad. In full control of the city since 1936, the Germans had fully integrated it into the Nazi orbit. German industrial research activity, the university laboratories, and the bacteriological warfare research the Nazis had conducted in the area, together with the wealth of material available relating to Nazi science in general, affected our experts as honey does bears. All the Alsos scientists—and their number was growing—discovered good reasons to travel to Strasbourg. That meant my base commander had to be not only a capable military man but one who could cope with the attitude and caprices of scientists. Reg Augustine was the man called up from Paris for this job. His performance at this exposed base proved excellent. I left Carl Fiebig and Gerry Beatson with him in Strasbourg.

The Von Haagen apartment continued to serve as headquarters, mess hall, social hall and living quarters for our few permanent personnel in Strasbourg. I. G. Farben offices on the first floor provided excellent office space for our visiting scientists, while a third-floor apartment was converted into living quarters for them.

Things were going well enough in Strasbourg to permit me to leave in early December. I could not help but be pleased to be on my way to our main base, where some of the effects of field operations could be washed off—or washed down.

CHAPTER XVII

A Breathing Spell?

But in Paris I learned there was to be no rest for any of us. It was my turn to be called back to Washington, Sam Goudsmit having already preceded me there. He had left without designating a replacement for himself. Fortunately, among the scientists who had joined us for the Strasbourg operation was Dr. Henry Reed, an able and pleasant engineer.

After a conference with Commodore Schade, I asked Reed to assume the duties of Deputy Scientific Chief. This proved a good move. Henry's organizational and administrative skills were to be of great value to us during the winter of 1944–45 when the unit was rapidly expanding.

In Washington, the status of our scientists and their activities were the primary concern, formally and informally. While no one made any comments which could imply criticism, it was evident that some rumblings from the field might not have been complimentary.

Sam and I soon cleared the air. Even those previously hostile were mollified by our reports. The most satisfying contacts were the ones I had with Colonel Nicholas and Colonel "Mickey" Moses. They had turned out to be Alsos' champions in the Pentagon and also my personal boosters.

During a lunch with them, Mickey Moses remarked, "I'm glad you're getting along with those longhairs."

"Longhairs, hell!" I said. And at the risk of repeating myself, I added, "Those guys are longhairs with crew-cuts. They can work, scheme, bitch, finagle and ride a jumping jeep right along with the best of our field soldiers. You heard about Sam Goudsmit keeping a move ahead of the MP's when he appropriated a government vehicle in which to explore France. Well, we now have an even wilder bunch. They're

running our operational men off their feet. We call them Salant's Circus."

"Salant? You mean Ed Salant, the internationally known scientist?"

"That's right. He doesn't care how he travels, what he eats or where he sleeps as long as he can hunt clues to the new Nazi proximity-fuse."

"No recreation?"

"Plenty. To see Paris right, just pick Ed as your guide—and companion."

"And the others?"

"They can play, too, believe me. Occasionally we devote an evening to some applied mathematics. You folks might call it poker, but we are more on the scientific plane."

The situation developing into the Battle of the Bulge required me to cut short my Washington visit. At the airport on 23 December, the sergeant told me my baggage was a pound over the allowed weight.

True, my bags contained nothing but Xmas cheer. Certain precious bottles I was hand-carrying in a large leather bag. My val-pak was filled with eggnog and other snacks. Clothes? I had no room for them. Howie Osborne had promised to ship them to me in Paris.

On Christmas Eve of 1944, Alsos threw a fine party at the Royal Monceau. My plane had had a narrow escape going into Prestwick, Scotland, in a dense fog, and had barely made it to Paris because of weather but all that was forgotten. The only sobering note was that Dick Ham had to leave at five A.M. Christmas Day for the Dinant area to evacuate a key German scientist and a batch of documents.

Dick had a close call on the return trip. He took an alternate route because he considered it likely that the Nazis would come down the main roads first. This proved a wise move. At two points the main road was closed up by Nazi patrols. And one intersection was hit by a German raiding party two hours after Dick had passed through.

By early January, the situation had become sufficiently critical to require the evacuation of our Strasbourg office. Reg Augustine had the most important files ready for sudden withdrawal and the others prepared for destruction. However, when we did close down the office on 8 January, Reg man-

aged to evacuate all the documents—although there were reports that the Nazis had infiltrated the Vosges Mountains and the roads leading out were not considered safe.

The days of the Bulge were particularly trying because we could not plan further moves. Moreover, despite our Strasbourg report, the high command was still worried as to what Hitler might have. He was throwing his V-2's at Antwerp and the rear areas in an effort to deny needed supplies to Allied troops. It was shortly after they had stopped the main Nazi thrust that SHAEF received a report of a projectile that hit deep in the Allied rear, and the explosion of which completely devastated the area for miles around. Doubt had been cast on the validity of our Strasbourg findings.

George Eckman had a four-man team ready to leave within five minutes of my return, Fred Wardenberg being its key man. Alsos moved out on schedule and in a few hours General Smith was informed by telephone that the reported damage had been grossly exaggerated. True, a somewhat greater area than usual had been severely affected—but only because of a freak explosion of a V-2.

By 8 February the tactical situation had improved sufficiently to allow Reg Augustine to reopen our Strasbourg office, now known as Alsos Forward South (AFwdS) to distinguish it from AFwdN which had been established in Aachen under Russ Fisher. It was Pete Oates, one of our agents from General Groves' staff, who renamed AFwdN the Aachen Royal Monceau. The selection of Major Fisher to command AFwdN had proved fortunate. An officer and a scientist, Russ was exceptionally qualified to handle our operations in an area where the Nazis had been conducting a wide range of scientific research. Russ Fisher was one man in our unit who literally doubled in brass.

During January we had been encouraged by two particularly heartening events. First, Ralph Cerame and Carl Fiebig had been commissioned second lieutenants. Second, word had been received that my trip to Washington had brought results. Alsos was to be given its own TO/E—Table of Organization and Equipment—with a definite allowance of personnel and specific items of equipment. The letter was more of a relief to George Eckman than anyone else because until that time we had used supplies and equipment he had been obliged to beg, borrow or steal. He maintained that he em-

ployed the first method while Bryan Conrad accused him of the last.

I decided to keep our main base in Paris for several reasons. We had to operate in the zones of three Army Groups whose activities were coordinated and directed by SHAEF, located at Versailles. The arrangement also permitted us to maintain the initiative in dealing with Washington. As for messages form the Pentagon, they came through ETOUSA headquarters in Paris. If we wanted to stall on a message or did not consider the contents sound, George Eckman could always reply that "Colonel Pash is in the field, but the matter will be taken up upon his return." In the meantime, through informal channels, the matter could be clarified. But perhaps the chief consideration was the fine working and living conditions available to our scientists in Paris. At no other place could we offer them a Royal Monceau.

Speaking of the Royal Monceau—during the early days, no guest could visit the officers in their rooms, all social activities being confined to the "main deck" and to the cocktail lounge "below deck." Later, male guests but not female ones were permitted to visit in the rooms. Finally, however, it was recognized that with the numbers of young blades reporting to Paris, a bit more freedom was indicated. Commander, Naval Forces for Germany, issued an order that gave us quite a chuckle: "As of 1700 hours of this date female guests will be permitted above the main deck from 1700 to 2100 hours for cocktails only."

After the Battle of the Bulge, Allied pressure in the north continued to roll back the Germans. During the early part of February, our unit prepared to go into Köln and Bonn. On 22 February, Major Fisher, with Lieutenant Rosenberger, reported at Liege, Belgium, to the 12th Army Group T-Force, now commanded by Col. John Haskell, and submitted the Alsos targets. Our officers immediately ran into the stiff, officious attitude of the Twelfth Army Group. Its T-Force's formal approach to target exploitation would have tied us up in knots. While trying to work out the problem, Russ Fisher sent Bill Rosenberger to Aachen to establish a base there.

In the suburb of Laurensberg, Rosenberger found a large house, the only one in the area with all its window panes intact—an important distinction for that time of year. On 25 February, Nat Leonard joined Rosenberger at AFwdN,

which was officially transferred from its temporary location at T-Force headquarters in Aachen.

On 27 February, Major Fisher came to Paris where he discussed the final plans for investigation of our targets. Our unit had recently been augmented by additional scientists and four officers from General Groves' office. Dr. T. Hogeness and James A. Lane, the latter from the Oak Ridge Laboratories, were to handle the atomic phase of our interests, in what, as Lane put it, would be his first "outing."

Russ Fisher brought back disquieting news regarding the manner in which the Twelfth Army Group T-Force expected us to operate. Our teams were supposed to remain at the field base until the T-Force went into Köln and took over all the targets, whereupon our mission would be allowed to follow.

We made our plans and Russ Fisher returned to Aachen on 1 March, accompanied by several officers and enlisted men. At our "war council" we had decided to employ an Alsos force larger than usual in order to rely as little as possible on the T-Force. Russ Fisher carried a message from me to Colonel Haskell in which I indicated General Siebert's approval of procedures peculiar to Alsos and requested Haskell to give Major Fisher the necessary support.

It was my intention to participate in the Köln operation, but first another trip to Strasbourg was necessary. A sudden interest in Alsos expressed by the French Military Government headquarters, and the possibility of a change-over from French to American control, had created a sensitive situation requiring my personal attention. The nature of our little unit was so highly classified that I had personally to handle the problems involving relationships with other commands.

The scientists of the northern force had spent the 4th and 5th of February investigating what was left of the technical installations in the Duren and Krefeld areas. This was the first time they had come in contact with the full evidence of the ravages of war. Duren had been completely leveled, and not a building was standing. Our scientists worked more like archeologists digging in ancient ruins than like modern-day technicians investigating laboratories. But some worthwhile results were obtained.

I joined Major Fisher on 5 March, the day word was received that our troops had launched a decisive attack to clear the west bank of the Rhine. On 5 March our operational team entered Köln amid some last-ditch fighting by Nazi

pockets remaining in the western part of the city. Because we intended to hit first the physics laboratory at the university, I risked bringing up Jim Land and Dr. Hogeness.

Thanks to Russ Fisher's detailed planning, we were able to make our way confidently past our own armor advancing to the river bank through the debris-littered streets.

From the laboratory, men of our forward patrols were firing at Germans across the river. The enemy was reciprocating. Our scientists were kept in a safe area until the operational personnel made a complete check of the building. The rooms exposed to enemy fire were marked, and the scientists were instructed to stay clear of them until further notice.

The sergeant was cooperative. But not my scientists or the Germans.

Jim Lane was anxious to investigate one of the off-limits offices and in spite of my warning went into the area. He immediately drew fire, the slugs hitting the walls above the desk he was checking. This startled him, but discouraged him not a bit.

The zeal of our scientists was understandable and commendable. But so was my desire to avoid having to explain to Washington why some scientist had been hit by rifle fire. I was obliged to insist that Jim and our other sleuths take care.

When we called it a day and were ready to load the jeeps with scientific loot, I was astonished by the load Jim Lane carried on his first trip from the laboratory—a Nazi ceremonial dirk, a swastika flag, a camera, and other souvenirs.

"No technical stuff, Doc?" queried Gerry Beatson, as astonished as I was.

"Plenty of that," Jim replied. "But I wanted to get this small stuff out of the way first." Seeing our expressions, he laughed. "You know I'm not the only scrounger in this outfit!" And completely unconcerned by enemy fire, he marched back to help carry off the technical harvest, which was considerable both in volume and in value.

On 8 March our entire group began several days of searching through the rubble of what had been a bacteriological laboratory and through the homes of several of our human targets. Captains Cromartie and Henze even picked up letters from the mailbox of the completely demolished residence of a German scientist.

The message they had brought from George Eckman urgently requested me to return to Paris. Our northern task

force remained to continue the exploitation of Köln and, later, Bonn targets, while Gerry Beatson and I left for Paris.

The results of the Köln-Bonn operation were not spectacular but they were productive, particularly in confirming much of the information obtained in Strasbourg. It was pleasing to report again to the top command that to the best of our knowledge there was no immediate Nazi atomic threat nor any in the fields of bacteriological warfare.

At nine that evening, while I bathed and changed, George Eckman told me that General Harrison expected me at Vittel the next day to discuss the impending Seventh Army advance across the Rhine. We agreed on a four A.M. departure with Gerry driving. George also told me that some of our people had delayed dinner so that I could join them.

Much to my surprise, after a brief speech during dinner, George Eckman handed me an official paper and a set of eagles. The War Department had promoted me to full colonel, my rank to date from 6 March. That was good news—particularly because all our scientists upon being assigned to Alsos were given the assimilated rank of colonel and so had been outranking me. However the "date of rank" was to prove of some significance in just a few weeks.

In the meantime, rank consciousness expressed itself. One of our scientists continually talked in the dining room about "equal treatment." Why should high-ranking officers live in hotels like the Royal Monceau while junior officers and enlisted men did not have the same comforts and facilities? He saw no need for special privileges. On one occasion, upon returning from a field trip, prior to which he had given up his spacious room with bath, he checked in and was assigned a room. In a few minutes I had a complaining, rank-conscious scientist on my hands. By golly, he was an assimilated colonel and he wanted a room commensurate with his rank. It was ridiculous to ask him to share a room on the seventh floor with a junior officer!

I listened patiently to all the sound reasons he gave for a "caste" system, one he generally criticized, but on this occasion championed.

"But, Doctor, haven't you been preaching no special privileges for higher ranks?"

"Okay, okay. I probably talked too much," was his response. "Just give me the type of room I've had and I'll shut up."

It so happened there was available a room "commensurate with his rank."

CHAPTER XVIII

The Rhine Is Crossed

A person noting the tempo of activity at Sixth Army Group Headquarters in the early days of March could not fail to be aware that something big was developing. Despite the weight of the impending major operation by his armies, General Devers had found time to suggest to General Harrison that "Boris Pash, and his gang of cutthroats should be alerted so they can make necessary plans." Gene Harrison had already sent word of the attack to me, but it was reassuring to both of us to know that Alsos had a place in the overall scheme of the Commanding General.

Two industrial cities on the Rhine River—Ludwigshaven on the left bank and Mannheim on the right—were the immediate Alsos objectives. In the Ludwigshaven-Heidelberg areas our targets included the I. G. Farben installations, the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute affiliates, the physics laboratory of Heidelberg University and a number of secondary plants and laboratories. They were of prime interest in a number of vital fields of scientific endeavor, apart from atomic research. Consequently our "second echelon" unit comprised of scientific personnel was to be relatively large. It would be necessary to make special arrangements if so sizable a group of scientists was to be provided for in the combat zone.

At Vittel everyone was poised for a big event. I was assured by General Harrison that the 6th Army Group T-Force had been instructed to give me the necessary support without restricting my operations. He suggested that my plans be checked with Colonel Pumpelli and the Seventh Army, the latter being the attacking force.

We reached the Seventh Army Headquarters on 15 March, about the time the forward elements were assaulting the "West Wall" or "Siegfried Line." While I was in the G-2 of-

fice talking to Colonel Perry, a report was received of Seventh Army troops taking some forts of the old Maginot Line. Other reports were coming in fast and furious, keeping the G-2 staff busy entering the information on the situation map. I sat in the long, narrow room where the furniture consisted of one wooden table, a couple of chairs, a metal field safe and a couple of wooden boxes to serve as benches. This field office was really austere. Colonel Perry walked in with two cups of steaming coffee. He had a short breathing spell and, like me, wanted to unwind. Both of us having been teachers prior to hostilities, we talked about our school experiences. I doubt that my former students at Hollywood High would ever believe that talking about them relaxed me.

With Colonel Perry's approval, I drove as far forward as possible without interfering with the "big war." A first-hand impression of conditions, particularly traffic conditions, was essential. I noted that the movement of troops was so heavy that even single vehicles were pulled off the roads to permit higher priority convoys to proceed.

After that "reconnaissance" I decided that our task force would assemble in Strasbourg and then move to Frankenthal, where the T-Force of the Sixth Army Group was to establish its base. The scientific group composing our second echelon was to follow closely and, without waiting to be called up, join the operational group at Frankenthal. This was a risk I considered necessary.

By the time I returned to Seventh Army Headquarters, Colonel Quinn was there. He concurred in my plan, supporting the idea of establishing my advance base in conjunction with the T-Force—which would have the 1269th Combat engineer Battalion in support.

"This is a good time for you to meet the other G's," he said, meaning the heads of the General Staff Sections of the Headquarters. "We're having a short conference."

I was amazed by the sight of the various G's when I walked into the war room. They were youngsters! Bill Quinn was five or six years younger than I. That put him at about 38 or 39. I considered that pretty young for the chief of a General Staff section of a field army. But Colonels Guthrie, G-3, and Oliver Harvey, G-4, were a few years younger, and Bill Craig, the G-1, was only 32. Sitting there in war council was the youngest General Staff of any of our field armies. A thought flashed through my mind: *No wonder these fellows*

get things done! They had not had time to develop "staffitis" —that military disease characterized by red tape getting into the blood and inflexibility into the thinking.

Before leaving Seventh Army Headquarters I sent George Eckman a message briefly outlining my plan and requesting him to assemble our group in Strasbourg by 19 March. The men to compose the task force had been prepared so far as the targets were concerned. They had acquainted themselves with all available information about the installations, had studied the city plans and reviewed photographs of the individuals and plants we hoped to seize.

That was to be the largest Alsos task force to mount an operation. It included eighteen operational personnel plus ten civilian and six military scientists. Among the operations men were some who had joined Alsos just a few days earlier, like Lt. Larry Brown and the two non-coms, Eddie Dolan and Harold Brown, from the Truck Company that had supported us in southern France and whose transfer, together with that of Lieutenant Edell, I had requested.

Too, we had some new names in our scientific group which, for the operation included Doctors T. Hogeness, Jim Lane, Louis Fieser of Harvard, Walter Colby of Michigan, Carl Bauman of Wisconsin and Fred Wardenberg of the Du Pont Company. There were also Capts. William Cromartie and Carlo Henze and Lt. Jesse Hofer (U.S. Navy), and the British contingent of Maj. H.M.B. Adam, Lt. Comdr. Eric Walsh and Flight Lt. Higman.

The task force arrived in Strasbourg on schedule after an overnight stop in Nancy.

On 20 March I conferred with Captain Cromartie and Reg Augustine regarding the tactical situation. The Seventh Army was throwing such large numbers of troops toward the Rhine that it appeared safe to move up within that protection. Rather than bring our task force to Frankenthal in two echelons, I decided to have the entire unit make the run at one time but in two sections, the second section remaining within thirty minutes' road time of the first.

We pulled out of Strasbourg early on 21 March and, following code signs, reached Seventh Army Headquarters now moved forward to Saareguemines. It was a bad time to report to a field command post. While all the sections were operat-

ing, they were not yet completely set up and the staff had all the complications it could handle. But the section chiefs found time for Alsos.

We learned that elements of the Third Army had followed the Kaiserslautern autobahn and reached the outskirts of Ludwigshaven. The Sixth Army Group T-force intended to set up its base at Frankenthal, a few miles north of Ludwigshaven. Colonel Guthrie suggested that we follow the road through Zweibrucken, where the bridge had been taken intact, and then move to the north and follow the autobahn east. We took his advice, but the trip turned out to be trying and slow. The roads were clogged with vehicles as the Seventh Army assembled units for the big drive across the Rhine. And that concentration was being followed by a huge movement of supplies. The roads in this area were not in good shape. And stalled or broken-down vehicles added to the confusion created by the wrecked armor and trucks of the retreating Nazis. We were beginning to see the stunned, stupified faces of the local Germans. They were unable quite to believe that the American army was rolling relentlessly over their land, pushing back the "invincible" Nazi war machine.

The advance Alsos unit moved along the autobahn so closely behind the forward combat elements that there had been no time for any movement-control detachments to put up regulatory signs. This almost brought about a major accident. Driving the lead jeep at a reasonable speed, but maintaining long spacing between the vehicles primarily as an anti-air strike precaution, Gerry Beatson barely had time to stop the jeep in front of a jackknifed bridge span blown up by the Germans.

In Frankenthal, we located the T-Force by its markers set up in windows. It had now set up headquarters in an abandoned military camp facing the main thoroughfare. A row of apartment buildings extended along the opposite side of the street. Reg Augustine was sent into the Headquarters to report our arrival and Carl Fiebig was to arrange for billets.

Reg came back shortly with the news that the T-Force was making arrangements for a large team of technical experts due to arrive under auspices of the CIOS.

Carl Fiebig arranged for us to occupy four apartments all serviced by the same front entrance. This meant we would have only one entrance to guard. Each apartment was com-

pletely furnished including bed linens and towels left as "used" when the occupants had fled.

It was late in the day. I called a short meeting to acquaint personnel with the situation and explain what was expected of each man. We were to wait in Frankenthal for the fall of Ludwigshaven and the Rhine crossing. One of my orders was that no one from Alsos was to be on the streets after dark.

Past experience should have warned me that one was playing with fire when longhairs were taken into the front lines. On the morning of 22 March, Dr. Walter Colby accompanied Reg Augustine and a driver on a probing trip toward Ludwigshaven to see how close our lines had come to the city and how soon the I. G. Farben plant might become available. As can frequently happen during fighting in built-up communities, the jeep proceeded without difficulty or interruption. Passing through a couple of small towns, neither Dr. Colby nor Reg noticed that they had entered Ludwigshaven itself. Continuing along a street, they came to a square and ran smack into a Nazi strongpoint. They were close enough to see the barrel of an anti-tank gun and faces of the crew.

The Germans must have been astounded by this daring approach of a single American jeep for they neglected to fire. Or perhaps suspected that the jeep would be followed by armor and waited for the more important target.

At any rate, the delay gave Reg Augustine a split second in which to realize his predicament. Later he told me his thoughts were not directed toward the German gun; he would rather have faced it than face me if we lost a scientist. He thought rather of the consequences to Alsos if we had to report to the Pentagon that we had taken scientists into the front lines to be shot up. He ordered the driver to run the jeep up an incline and across some tracks and then turn back. The Germans snapped out of their lethargy, but the single salvo and the few machine-gun bursts went wide.

And what about our "longhair with a crew-cut?" Talk about the scientific attitude. He was able to give us a detailed description of the German strongpoint, its characteristics, its position in the square and it location in the city—which he established by pointing out on a map the names he recalled of the streets leading into the square.

Dr. Colby's safe return was to be duly celebrated that evening with the help of some liberated cognac. Liberated not by our dashing military men but by our "pure" scientists.

In the early afternoon I led a fairly sizable operational group toward the I. G. Farben, which we managed to enter without any complications. Within minutes the forward elements of an armored division arrived. Shortly after that, the Division Commander arrived with his staff and occupied the plant. It was not difficult to spot his trailer-command post. I immediately called on him and was pleasantly surprised to find General Ernest with a cup of hot coffee in his hand. We briefly discussed our last meeting—during the engagement at L'Acrouest.

To my embarrassment he told me that he had not received any of my reports on that operation. But he was cordial and interested, and his attitude made my next move an easy one. I mentioned the importance of insuring that no damage be done to the plant and that no documents be destroyed. Since some time would elapse before the T-Force took over, because this was still the battlefield, I asked the General if he would spare some troops for a guard detail.

All buildings were immediately declared off limits and guards were posted. I then began an inspection of the plant, accompanied by a captain from an armored division and a number of our own men. I stationed one at each key laboratory or office to check it over, lock cabinets and mark the keys.

I returned to our base pleased with the day's work. Although the fighting was still in progress for control of the city, the presence of the armored division and the anticipated final attack by one of our infantry divisions gave me enough assurance to decide to bring the Alsos scientists into the Farben plant the following morning.

Early on 23 March several Alsos teams, each containing one or more scientists, left Frankenthal and traveled to Ludwigshaven in convoy. This was the first time that a large group of our scientists had been in the combat zone while actual fighting was in progress.

Our teams immediately went to the sections in which they had an interest. They were permitted to enter upon identifying themselves as members of Alsos. One has to give credit to our combat scientists. Observing them at their work, I could not help but admire the competence and devotion with which they performed their investigations.

Soon our scientific sleuths were emerging from the build-

ings with bundles of documents and cartons of experimental equipment.

On 24 March, our troops cleared Ludwigshaven of the last Nazi troops, driving them across the river. That morning, while at breakfast, we saw a company of combat engineers, a part of the T-Force, move out in the direction of Ludwigshaven to relieve the company guarding the I. G. Farben plant. Our scientists were in no hurry to get there because they had performed the major portion of their work the day before. But technical personnel connected with the CIOS had been arriving throughout the morning, all keyed up for the impending move. It was interesting to watch the effect of bombshells casually dropped by our scientists, sounding something like this:

"Oh, sure. You'll be able to go to the Farben plant tomorrow after the T-Force secures it. You'll find it interesting. We know, because we were there yesterday."

During the afternoon of 25 March, word was received from Seventh Army Headquarters that the assault crossing of the Rhine was to take place that night. The message also stated that a couple of our jeeps might be able to move across the next morning and that within a day or two the rest of our operational elements might cross the river. This made it necessary to refine our plans. That evening all personnel were informed by me that large troop movements would take place and that everyone was to remain in quarters after the evening meal.

At about eleven P.M., after assuring myself that everyone had turned in, I followed suit. Some time after midnight, liberated cognac was having its effect on one of the liberators. A prominent scientist, he was unawed by the thunder of the guns pounding the Germans on the right bank. Having learned that preparations for the crossing were under way, he had no intention of missing such a historical event. But he did not want to hunt the action alone. So he started searching for his friend, Jim Lane.

Some of our men were sleeping in beds but most were in bedrolls stretched on the floor. To find Lane, our scientist would pull the blanket away from the man's face, aim a flashlight at him, then step over or on him to the next man. Our scientist repeated this until the light fell on the face of startled Jim Lane. He shook Lane out of his sleep, told him

he was going to cross the Rhine with the troops, and invited Lane to go along. Lane refused.

Offended, he stood straddling Lane, flashlight pointed at his victim's face. Spurred to noble expression by the potent cognac, he said in a dramatic voice, "This is a historical event! Your grandchildren will never forgive you if you don't cross with our noble soldiery tonight."

Lane answered with a snore. The cognac-happy scientist finally gave up on Lane and staggered into my room, grasped my shoulders, shook violently. "Get up, get up! They're crossing!" The words brought me up with a jerk. "Who's crossing?" Were the Germans counterattacking?

"The glorious Seventh American Army," he replied. "This is a momentous occasion. It's no time to sleep!"

Sure enough, the roar from outside was ear-splitting. It sounded as though every gun we had was blasting away.

"You'd better go to bed," I admonished. And to be more convincing, I added, "If you sneak out of here without the password, you're apt to be shot by a sentry."

Our good scientist managed to get through the doorway and was gone. On a hunch I got up, pulled on my boots and walked into his room. His bunk was empty. The noise of the rumbling steel giants moving along the street in total darkness sent a cold shudder up my spine. What if the man left the building and tried to cross the street? The drivers of the lumbering tanks might run over him and never know it.

Not locating him in the building, I spoke to the guard at the compound gate. "Did you see a man come this way—walking rather unsteadily?" And I described my fugitive.

"No, sir," replied the guard. "No such person around here."

But I noticed that the guard, shielding his hand with his body, was pointing his thumb at an open door of the nearest building. A glance showed me that there was a man behind the door. To help the guard maintain his neutrality, I said, while grabbing the door, "Well, if you see him, please let me. . . ."

The door swung back and revealed the scientist. I was the more irritated by his hide-and-go-seek game because my chances of getting some sleep were fast diminishing.

"Doctor," I said, "you will kindly accompany me to your room, and you will then go to bed."

He threw back his shoulders. "Colonel, I don't like the way

you're talking to me. I'd like to be talked to in keeping with my rank, which I've held for some time."

At this time it is proper to point out that this scientist had received his assimilated colonelcy considerably earlier than I had received my "eagles." Having seniority and an assimilated rank pulled on me under the circumstances was quite exasperating, particularly when done by someone from a group that generally scoffs at the military caste system.

"A commanding officer issues commands regardless of rank," I barked. "If you want me to issue some commands to the guards, I'll be glad to."

At this, he walked back to our building and sat down on the front step. I sat down a few feet from him. After some minutes he got up and walked off to bed.

On the night of that incident in Frankenthal, things had really been popping. The buildings of the town shook from the shock waves generated by the gun explosions, and later they started to shudder when deep rumblings and clanking noises announced that our big amphibious tanks were rolling toward the Rhine.

Still sleepy and cold in the damp, early morning, I took a couple of jeeps and started in the direction of Worms, where we were to cross the river. The going was rough. Troops and equipment were being pushed through the crossing and the concentration there was extremely heavy. Our engineers had thrown across the pontoon bridge in the shadow of the large railroad bridge now destroyed. But traffic was restricted to armor and infantry, those being in immediate demand on the other side. I decided not to pull my authority from Washington and SHAEF, but instead to wait.

This was the only time an Alsos unit failed to carry through an intended move once it had committed itself, and I was responsible. Our fighting elements were needed on the other side. I could see no justification for even slightly delaying their advance, regardless of our anxiety to get across.

The Rhine crossing by our forces made a majestic scene. Of course, if one looked for detail rather than the big picture, so many separate activities tended to give the impression of confusion.

The overall scene was one of long columns of American armor moving relentlessly across the low-silhouetted bridge, with the ruins of the solid old railroad bridge in the background.

It was a thrilling sight, evoking as never before an appreciation of the might of the American Army.

Our Alsos spearhead remained poised to cross at the first opportunity. Again I departed from normal—or as Washington might have put it, "sensible"—procedure. The situation on the far bank of the Rhine was still fluid. The pontoon bridge was at best a temporary link, which could always be severed. If we did not make a dash for it, there was no telling when we would be able to get to Heidelberg and get hold of the anticipated prizes. Doctors Hogeness and Wardenberg had volunteered to risk the sprint to the famous university town glamorized by Gilbert and Sullivan.

So the first time "daylight" showed in the solid column of vehicles, our small unit consisting of the two scientists plus Carl Fiebig, Gerry Beatson, Joe Lusnia and our newly assigned fighting Irishman, Eddie Dolan, was led by me across the Rhine.

We reached the other bank without difficulty and turned south toward Mannheim.

CHAPTER XIX

Gaudeamus Igitur

Alsos was on the east bank of the Rhine! A quick glance at our scientists assured me that they were as delighted—and as unabashed by the possibility of trouble—as our soldiers.

We found the I. G. Farben plant in Mannheim damaged badly by aerial and ground fire. We paused only long enough for a preliminary examination and identification of specific rooms or sections within the plant to be placed off limits.

Checking with the tactical commander, we learned that an infantry battalion had entered Heidelberg in the afternoon. But its report said that the roads leading into Heidelberg were not safe for single vehicles. In fact, retreating Nazi units were still in control of some main roads. The colonel in command therefore suggested that we try the side roads.

At T-Force headquarters, we learned that the main body of that unit was to remain in Mannheim until the situation in Heidelberg cleared up. However, one company of the 1269th Combat Engineer battalion had been sent in with the assault force, primarily to seize Alsos targets and give us the necessary support.

Despite the good colonel's warning, we were determined to push on. I thought it best to stop, however, long enough for the men to get a hot meal and go over the jeeps.

Within a short distance, on the edge of a village, we came upon a heart-wrenching scene. Two burned-out American armored personnel carriers, still smoldering, lay on the side of a road. Apparently they had suffered direct hits by enemy shells. The bodies of the crews were either in the vehicles or on the ground.

It was apparent that none of our units had passed this way since the action. There were a number of German civilians standing around, staring at the tragic scene. Their expressions

did not indicate sorrow, and their attitude toward us was anything but friendly. We could not stop to take care of the bodies and in any case not much could be done until a Graves Registration unit arrived. But we did warn the local people that any desecration of the dead or plundering of the property would be held against the community. I told the town Elder that he would be responsible, and ordered him to post a guard around the vehicles.

We left the vicinity with heavy hearts. Shortly thereafter we ran into an incident that nearly caused me to lose my self-control. As we approached an intersection where four of five small roads converged, I saw two Germans standing nearby. "Which is the road to Heidelberg?" I called out.

Both men moved at the same time, the first pointing in one direction while the other pointed the opposite way. I stopped the jeep abruptly, gave an order to Carl Fiebig. "Tell these men I'm going to take both of them along and find out the true direction of Heidelberg. Then I'll hang the man who lied." My fists were clenched. I was not altogether kidding, for the sight of the ambush was still fresh in my mind's eye.

But Carl hadn't finished translating before both pointed in a third direction, the actual road to Heidelberg, at the same time apologizing profusely and explaining they had not understood my question.

Without further complications, we reached Heidelberg by dusk. After a short search, the engineer company's CP was located on the north bank of the Neckar River.

Our plan for the Heidelberg operation had been carefully worked out. Hence, Professor Walther Bothe being our prime target, we knew the exact location of his laboratory.

But the company commander did not go along. His men had just moved in and were establishing their base. Furthermore, he was not sure of the tactical situation. He promised to provide the assistance, but not until morning. To me the situation did not appear dangerous nor the risk of moving to the target at night too risky, since the laboratory was also located on the north bank.

By that time it was full dark. We began working our way through the unlit streets. The two scientists drove while Joe Lusnia and Carl Fiebig manned machine-guns. Larry Brown, Gerry Beatson and Eddie Dolan joined me in a skirmish line that advanced ahead of the jeeps.

On reaching the courtyard of the laboratory, we were met

by a much surprised individual who identified himself as the manager. He was placed in a room under guard of Joe Lusnia and relieved of his keys.

From him we learned that in a hospital building about two hundred yards away there were several hundred wounded German soldiers. All other German troops, it seemed, had pulled out.

A reasonable number of the wounded could be expected to be ambulatory and might try something rash. I rushed Carl Fiebig to the hospital. "Tell the senior officer I shall hold him responsible for the conduct of his troops—tell the chief doctor the same regarding his staff. All troops and hospital personnel are prisoners of war and will remain within the hospital walls until otherwise ordered.

The laboratory manager quickly offered assistance. "Your men are probably tired, Colonel," he said. "I will arrange for their beds. How many will you need?"

I was always sensitive about the size of my outfit. And curiosity on the part of persons in areas we were taking over never failed to arouse my suspicions.

"Thanks," I replied. "I'll need room for two hundred and fifty men."

"What! I'm afraid, sir, that we can't supply that many beds—"

"You will please go with Lieutenant Brown and show him which rooms will serve best. The men will use their bedrolls."

"Yes, sir."

"Show Lieutenant Brown your water supply and any facilities you have for cooking. After that you will be escorted to the hospital. There you will await my call in the event that I need you."

However, our scientists asked that the manager be directed first to show them the key offices and laboratories and where documents were stored. I changed my instructions, telling the man to remain until released by Dr. Wardenberg.

It was close to ten that night when we started searching the building. Hogeness, Wardenberg and two men detailed to them busily stacked documents, opened safes, sorted material and decided which rooms had to be sealed. Carl Fiebig opened safes and cabinets that resisted normal efforts.

Any rest our men had that night was in the form of catnaps. While we had two men always alert to any outside movements, the others, if not working on the investigation,

were acting as informal guards. A bedroll stretched on the floor, a chair or even a table, supplied some of us with a wink or two.

At about 3:30 in the morning, we called a halt. With the coming of dawn, those asleep were rudely awakened by violent explosion seemingly coming from the courtyard. Joe Lusnia, racing to a window, shouted back in surprise and apprehension, "Colonel, artillery is right across the river!"

Sure enough, some of our mobile howitzers had moved in during the night to support the infantry. At least four were lined up with their snouts pointing toward the hills southeast of Heidelberg.

It was about six in the morning when we assembled, ready to mount our jeeps. Suddenly, on the other side of the low brick wall of the courtyard, I saw a couple of American soldiers in full battle array, advancing slowly with bayonets fixed, peering around cautiously. Behind them three more men appeared, one with a burp gun. This had to be a skirmish line. The advancing men were followed by a sergeant who was busily giving hand signals to unseen troops obviously following him.

Were we cut off? Had our forces withdrawn during the night and were these men counterattacking? Just what gives? Those were some of the thoughts running through my mind. As the non-com moved closer I instinctively crouched, asking in a hushed tone, "Sarge, what's the scoop?"

His voice was also muffled as he replied, "Sir, we're taking over this place for somebody."

"Sarge, you can send word back that that 'somebody' has already taken it over."

I identified myself and, when the lieutenant in command came up, I explained matters to him and asked him to place the laboratory under guard. Astonishment possessed his face as he glanced over the wall and saw jeeps and soldiers in the courtyard.

Assured that the troops would remain at the laboratory and that the Germans in the hospital henceforth would be under firm military control, Hogeness and Wardenberg stayed on to continue their investigation. One jeep was left with them so that they could return to the Engineer CP for their meals and otherwise move around. I left with the others to establish a base, after which the rest of our group could be

called up. Our next target was a Dr. Krauch, one of the top I. G. Farben officials and high on our priority list.

General Devers had informed me that the Sixth Army Group would set up headquarters in the city. A check with the G-1 Section left me no doubt that in the city proper—that is, on the left bank—all desirable buildings and homes subject to requisition were to be assigned to headquarters activities and billets. It was suggested that we establish our base on the right bank.

At the Engineer CP we met Reg Augustine, who had just arrived with a couple of men according to plan. I gave him the job of finding suitable Alsos quarters. That freed the rest of us to go after our next objective.

Within a short time, accompanied by Carl Fiebig, Gerry Beatson and Eddie Dolan in two jeeps, I was at the barge-ferry crossing set up by the Seventh Army pontoon bridge unit. Dr. Krauch's home, we had been informed, was in Schlierbach-Zellendorf, a suburb and a railroad stop about three miles upriver on the left bank. Fortunately, there were no higher priority units to be ferried across, so we landed on the home grounds of *The Student Prince* at about eight in the morning.

Apparently our advancing units were beginning to sift through Heidelberg and follow the river to the east. No doubt, other probes were moving south. In between these prongs were high, thickly wooded hills. Had they been cleared? That was the queston.

We moved forward, hugging the walls of buildings wherever possible. Our speed was slightly faster than that of the small advancing unit we had just caught up with.

Just short of the Schlierbach-Zellendorf railroad station and the bridge across the river, we overtook the major and his three-jeep advance unit. He had stopped while a couple of his men were advancing cautiously toward the station and two others were moving in the direction of the bridge underpass through which the road snaked along the river. Just short of the bridge, a road cut off to the right and up the side of the hill. This was the road leading to Krauch's residence.

The major was not sure what lay around the bend beyond the bridge. He so informed me and added that he was going to move as far as Neckargemünd, about five miles beyond. His men, experienced in the ambush type of warfare the Germans were employing, were hesitant about "leaping before

looking" and properly were advancing with extreme caution. Learning that at the bridge we would cut off to the hills, he warned that the areas off the main road had not been cleared. In response to my request, he reluctantly promised to send help if he heard firing from the hillside.

He did not have long to wait. Shortly after we moved on, two shots rang out from above. Gerry Beatson sprayed the woods with a short burst. The major sent four of his men to check the area and they reported no sign of the enemy. Apparently the stacatto of our machine gun had done the trick.

After a time we reached a magnificent estate. Turning into a long driveway, we rolled up to a substantial home built on a relatively level spot in the center of a sloping, eleven-acre garden. A great veranda on the back of the house overlooked the Neckar.

We did not get Krauch but we did get his house. In it we found his family and a number of other people. Friends had assembled there during previous weeks, coming from bombed-out areas. The organization of the house explained how the Krauches managed to accomodate all these people. In addition to the large number of bedrooms upstairs, there were seventeen reasonably comfortable bunks in the basement.

I informed Frau Krauch that she and her friends were to clear the estate by three o'clock that afternoon. Since it was then not quite eleven this gave them four hours in which to pack. Carl Fiebig went down to the main road and found several jeeploads of men and a couple of tanks temporarily inactive. He relayed to the senior officer my request to make a thorough reconnaissance of the wooded section around us. My SHAEF special pass again served its purpose, the officer promptly undertaking the task. Feeling secure with the arrangement, I left Carl in charge of the estate with Eddie Dolan to help him.

On the other side of the river, I found that Reg Augustine had been as successful as I had been in establishing a base. Seventh Army Engineers were to throw a pontoon bridge across the Neckar on 30 March. This would facilitate movement over the stream and make even more desirable the Krauch home as an advance operational base to be known as Alsos Forward.

I rejoined Carl at the residence and proceeded to take it

over. Thereupon we ran into one of those odd incidents always occurring when dealing with an enemy.

A young German widow, who with her small daughter had found refuge in the Krauch residence, had no place to go. Frau Krauch spoke up in the widow's behalf, asking that she be permitted to stay and help in the kitchen. I gave my consent, but restricted the widow to her room on the lower level, the kitchen and a special section of the huge grounds. The woman said something to Frau Krauch that caused the latter some embarrassment. I insisted that she explain. Frau Krauch then went into detail about the widow. Wife of an officer and daughter of an industrialist, her husband had been killed on the Russian front.

Eventually the widow had to be sent away because of her aggressiveness in pursuit of my men. She had given up waiting for the rape to begin.

Heidelberg proved a mine of information for our scientists. Moreover, it gave them access to the only functioning cyclotron in Germany. And among the noted scientists taken by Alsos in addition to Dr. Bothe were Phillip Lenard and Richard Kubin. But Sam Goudsmit was convinced that still more fruits were to be harvested in the Heidelberg area.

Early Sunday, 1 April, the day after we had moved into the Krauch residence, Larry Brown knocked on my door. He reported that an important message had reached the "Rear." Armored vehicles had been assigned to Alsos and should be picked up at Mannheim.

After being turned down twice by Washington during our early stages, I had talked to Colonel "Sad" Sam Daniels, Chief of Supply for the Ordance Section of ETOUSA. Hearing my story, he had promised to give me an assist at the first opportunity. Now he had come through.

At Mannheim I signed a 30-day Memorandum Receipt for 2 armored cars, 4 jeeps with machine-gun mounts and a pair of .50-caliber machine-guns (we already had two captured German light machine-guns). Colonel Daniels and I both knew that many more than thirty days would pass before the equipment would be returned.

Returning to Heidelberg, I further inspected the arrangements made by Reg Augustine for the Alsos Rear base—including our administrative set-up and billets for the scientists and military personnel. Fully equaling those of Alsos Forward at the Krauch estate, the accommodations included

three large mansions and a restaurant-beergarden high up on Philosophienweg, overlooking the river. We were to use this headquarters until the end of our activities in Germany.

Although many trying times lay ahead of us, after the first few days in Heidelberg, we could quote from *The Student Prince:* ". . . then let us be joyful!"

CHAPTER XX

Alsos Strikes Again

We had no more than settled in our comfortable Heidelberg base when word came from the Sixth Army Group to maintain a two-hour alert. The rapidly changing situation had brought close the possibility that our two most critical target areas might be within reach at any time. One was Stadtilm, in Thuringia, where Gerlach and Diebner were conducting research. Dr. Gerlach was one of Germany's top atomic scientists, and Sam Goudsmit was very anxious to get him and his laboratory. The second target was the Hechingen-Bisingin complex in Wurtemberg. Mention of this area was sufficient to send Sam and his scientific colleagues into a frenzy, for it was thought to be where the major Nazi atomic effort was going on. The two best-known German atomic experts, Werner Heisenberg and Otto Hahn, were reportedly conducting research there, the former in charge of the overall project. It was my impression that Sam Goudsmit had a particular urge to pick up Dr. Heisenberg, whom Sam had known well in pre-war days.

A major effort to reach the Würtemberg targets had been in the planning stages since March. Shortly after our Kohl operation, instructions had been received from Washington to request General Devers to mount an airborne operation against the Hechingen-Bisingen complex. The purpose of the drop was to seize the area and, under heavy air protection, fly in a small team of scientists to make a swift investigation of Nazi atomic research activities.

The Pentagon had already informed the 6th Army Group that I would report with special instructions, and had requested that my interests be given favorable consideration.

Once again some fast long-distance driving had to be done. Soon a perspiring lieutenant colonel was standing before a

huge wall map in the War Room of the 6th Army Group. He was exhorting General Devers and the top four generals of his staff (1) to change the Army Group battle plans (2) to shift the missions of the two armies in the field and consequently (3) to cross the paths of those two armies—all without telling said generals why! The French army, currently moving toward the area of Alsos interest, was to be diverted to the north while the American Seventh Army was to take up the former's mission: but both were to stay out of the core of that mysterious area. I looked General Devers in the eye and concluded:

"General, I should like to have a battalion attached to me, since I and a few of my men will be in the initial drop. You see, when the area is cleared the division will hold it. But a specific smaller area, which I shall designate, will be taken over by me."

"You haven't told us why you want all this, Pash," remarked General Devers in his soft, even voice.

"I'm sorry, sir. I hope you appreciate my position. My instructions are not to disclose the purpose of the operation. We all know that if it were not important, such drastic measures would not be requested."

General Harrison had warned me that "the Old Man will have to have the full picture and you better give it to him if you want help from him." Yet General Devers' reaction indicated that he knew the officer standing before him was in a tough spot. This was one of several occasions that illustrated to me the breadth of this man. He did not discuss me nor did he ride me. He did ask, still in that soft voice:

"Colonel, are you concerned with a matter involving explosive forces beyond anything we now know?"

I could not answer.

General Barr, the Chief of Staff, asked, "If General Groves were mentioned, would that mean something to you?"

General Devers was boring holes in me with his eyes. In any case, I could not lie.

I tried to make the best of it. "General, apparently you know what Alsos is after. But in beating around the bush with you, I was following explicit instructions from Washington."

"We'll take this up with General Eisenhower. He's the one who'll have to make the decision."

Supreme Headquarters
ALLIED EXPEDITIONARY FORCE
Office of the Chief of Staff

11 April 1945

MEMORANDUM FOR: Commander-in-Chief, 21 Army Group
Commanding General, 12 Army Group
Commanding General, 6 Army Group
Commanding General, Communications Zone

This will introduce Colonel B. T. Pash, GSC, O-275706, who is on a special mission for the Supreme Commander in connection with a matter of great importance to the British and U.S. Governments.

It is requested that he be given whatever assistance he may require in carrying out this mission, including permission to enter and visit anywhere within the forward operational areas.

By direction of the Supreme Commander:

W. B. Smith

W. B. SMITH,
Lieutenant General, U. S. Army,
Chief of Staff.

General Bedell Smith's office at SHAEF was our next stop for planning purposes. Sam Goudsmit and Bob Furman joined me when we met with General Smith and his J-3, Gen. Harold R. Bull, and Gen. Elbridge G. Chapman, the CG of the 13th Airborne Division. General Devers had sent Gen. Rube Jenkins to the conference. Lt. Col. John Lansdale had flown in from Washington to represent General Groves.

General Eisenhower had been informed of Washington's directive. But because all airborne operations were under SHAEF control, the approval and general plan had to come from that headquarters. We were at Rheims to present our

own plan and get the go-ahead from General Smith. John Lansdale and Sam Goudsmit had discussed that play in detail with General Devers. Two scientists were to come in by plane under heavy air escort after the 13th AB Division had secured the area. Two C-46's were to be used in evacuating Alsos scientists and operational personnel along with any captured German personnel and equipment.

After the evacuation the Airborne Division was to remain on the ground, conducting raiding missions and attacking supply lines while moving in the general direction of Berlin.

We left Rheims, Sam Goudsmit and Bob Furman for Paris to prepare for the scientific phase of the operation, and I for Heidelberg to prepare the operational team.

Orders came from General Devers for me to report to Seventh Army Headquarters for a final briefing for Effective, the code name of the operation. A few minutes before one P.M., the time set for the briefing, Colonel Quinn led me into the War Room. Other participants had already assembled. These included General Chapman and his deputy, Brig. Gen. Hammond M. Monroe; the CG of the Tactical Air Command; the CG of the XXI Corps and his two Division commanders, and the chiefs of Seventh Army Staff Sections. All were standing because the only chair in the room was a round stool in front of a huge map of southwest Germany covering one of the walls. One could sense the expectancy on the part of all present.

At exactly one the door opened and a tall, lean general with sharp but friendly features walked over to the stool and sat down. This was Lt. Gen. Alexander Patch, Seventh Army Commanding General.

"Who is Pash?" he snapped.

"I am, sir."

"Start talking."

I walked up to the map and explained the plan of the operation, stating that while the Division would drop to seize initially the Hechingen-Bisingen area, I would drop with my small unit and a paratroop battalion. We would form three groups. The first, with one company, was to seize the targets in the drop area. The other two groups, each with an airborne company, would move out against Tailfingen and Haigerloch. I described the activities of the scientists and the plan for the evacuation of captured personnel and documents. What I did not tell anyone and did not reveal at the

briefing was that Eddie Dolan and I were to remain behind with the Division. Assuming that this was the major concluding operation, and having discussed my plan with George Eckman, I had decided to do some investigating behind the lines, possibly in Stadtilm and Berlin. Eddie Dolan had volunteered to join me.

When I was through talking, General Patch asked, "Have you anything else to say?"

"No, sir," was my answer. Whereupon he stood up and walked out without a word. I was astonished. As I stood there with my mouth open, everyone else relaxed.

"What happens now, Bill?" I asked Quinn. "Is everything okay? Does the General approve?"

"If he had been dissatisfied with any part of your briefing, you would have heard about it," Quinn said.

That was my first contact with General Patch, and I was not quite sure of my reaction. But during my association with his staff officers I learned that they were all very fond of him and considered him a great military leader. As my work with the Seventh Army continued, I came to share their opinion.

The day arrived when my small volunteer group was embarked on an undertaking about which, I'm sure, none of us was enthused.

My personal feelings were somewhat complicated. On the one hand I was convinced that this was an essential and high priority operation. Washington wanted absolute proof that no atomic activity of which it did not know was being carried on by the Nazis. It also wanted to be sure that no prominent German scientist would evade capture or fall into the hands of the Soviet Union.

On the other hand frankly, I feared the jump. Still, an Alsos group had to drop with the airborne force. In such a case, I would not call for volunteers unless I was willing to lead them.

So once again a small Alsos unit was on the move. Word had arrived from General Devers for us to join the 13th AB Division.

Larry Brown, Carl Fiebig, Gerry Beatson and Eddie Dolan were waiting in two jeeps as I came out of the Krausch residence. Gerry tried to tell a joke but his voice was too high-pitched. Eddie fumbled with his shirt, his neckerchief—re-

minding me of a pitcher's nervous motions as he prepares to pitch. Larry and Carl were unusually quiet.

George Eckman, up from Paris for a conference, wanted last-minute instructions regarding the availability of operational personnel for the several projects we had in the mill. It was also important to George to have the scientific landing party, which was to assemble in Paris, ready to take off in the event the air drop was successful. However, in true Eckman fashion, he remarked, "So off you go on another little lark. You characters do anything to avoid routine work—"

With Paris so close to our rendezvous point, it was natural for the men to want to make a run for that gay city. No activity being scheduled for us until the following afternoon, there was no reason to deny their request other than to keep one of them with me in case of emergency. Eddie Dolan drew the low card.

An hour after the men left, George Eckman was on the phone advising me of an urgent need for my unit to return to Heidelberg. "Boris, you'll have to stick around on the ground for a while. A friend of Sam's by the name of Dave will meet you in Heidelberg tomorrow and give you the dope. The other one is opening up and Sam is anxious that you go in behind the bayonets." George was telling me that we were to hit Stadtilm. "Stop off to see Gene Harrison," he continued. "We'll try to get a preliminary message to him."

"George," I told him, "Brownie, Carl and Gerry are on their way to Paris. They are to contact you at ten tomorrow morning. Have them report to Corps Headquarters in the area where I'll be operating. Instructions will be left in the G-2 office. If you can reach them before that, so much the better. Anything else you can tell me?"

"Nothing except that Sam is on pins and needles about this one. Good luck."

Late that night I briefed the duty officer of the 13th Airborne staff on the most recent developments and asked him to tell General Chapman that we would be away for a few days. We allowed ourselves a three-hour nap. At one o'clock on the morning of 10 April, Eddie Dolan and I pulled out for Sixth Army Group Headquarters in Kaiserslautern—a 300-mile trip.

The Germans were showing signs of collapse. The planes originally assigned to Operation Effective were now committed to other operations, including a possible airborne sally

HEADQUARTERS
THIRD UNITED STATES ARMY
APO 403

11 April 1945

MEMORANDUM

To: Commanding General, VIII Corps.

1. This will introduce Colonel B. T. Pash, GSC, O-275706, whose signature appears below, who is on a special mission for the Supreme Commander in connection with a matter of great importance.

2. Colonel Pash's party consists of five (5) officers, two (2) agents and four (4) enlisted men, with two (2) armored cars and four (4) ¼-ton trucks.

3. It is requested that he be given whatever assistance he may require in carrying out his mission which is of particular interest in the area of STADTILM (J 34).

By command of Lieutenant General PATTON:

PAUL D. HARKINS,
Colonel, GSC,
Deputy Chief of Staff.

against Berlin itself. Our air strike into Wurtemberg was off. This meant not only setting up the Stadtilm operation on the run but also giving proper instructions to our planners in Heidelberg so they could prepare the ground operation against Wurtemberg targets. The bulk of the work would fall on Dick Ham and Bob Blake.

Before leaving Army Group I phoned Dick Ham. He would prepare the Stadtilm unit for the move. I told him it was to comprise a twenty-man task force with the two armored cars and as many jeeps as would be required. There would be no time to coordinate the operation with the field commanders and it might be carried out in the midst of the fighting.

Eddie and I traveled along a country road toward the Autobahn. As we neared a wooded area, five rifle shots cracked out and we heard the buzzing of the slugs as they passed over our heads. The shots had come from a stand of young pine to our left. The jeep shuddered to a panic stop.

"The shots all came from one direction, Eddie," I said.

"More likely it's only one bastard, and by now he's running to save his hide."

There was only one thing to do—surprise the foe. Fortunately, the engine was still running.

"Get ready," I told Eddie. "When I give the word, you jump into the back seat and spray the woods with your carbine. I'll jump into the driver's seat and gun the jeep."

"The driving is my business, Colonel. You can cover me." Since the driver's seat was on the side from which the fire came, Eddie considered the driving job the more dangerous. My decision had been dictated by practicality rather than courage. Fast, jerky movements could cause my glasses to shift, in which case I would be useless with a rifle.

"Do as you're told, Eddie. I'll throw my carbine into the rear seat. It has a full clip. Ready? Go!"

We leaped together. I hit the driver's seat, released the brake and stepped on the accelerator, all in one clumsy motion. The jeep gave a tremendous jerk as its spinning wheels caught and propelled us ahead. Eddie was firing through the dust raised by our departure.

In Heidelberg, I found both our command posts in a fever of activity. Our first stop was at Alsos Rear. Fred Wardenberg, Jim Lane and our other scientists were preparing for departure. Dick Ham had sent a jeep to the cow pasture used as a landing field. Three armed jeeps were ready at the motor pool, their crews anxious to get going.

Dave Griggs flew in his light plane from Paris and brought certain awaited planning information. A research laboratory in Stadtilm was our immediate target. My impression of scientists was improving with each one I met. Here was a man whose scientific stature was second to none but there was no problem about fitting him into our hard-bitten combat team. A Harvard geophysicist, Dave was attached to the staff of the Commander of the U.S. Air Force in Europe, Gen. Carl Spaatz.

Dave gave me the big news that we would be looking for an actual Nazi atomic pile. That knowledge drove us on. Although there was reasonable assurance that Hitler did not have the bomb, Sam Goudsmit and his scientists had to make sure that he was not about to come up with one.

Our task force moved out of Heidelberg late in the afternoon and reached VI Corps Headquarters at about the time the sergeant thought his day was over.

Further driving had to be restricted to side roads because of heavy troop traffic. It became increasingly apparent that we were nearing the combat area. Wrecked armor, abandoned equipment, smoldering ruins of buildings, testified to the proximity of the battle line. So did dead Germans still lying in the field. It was getting late and I did not want to come on the battle area in the dark. At a crossroads we found an abandoned two-story house with a service yard enclosed by a high stone fence. This was an ideal spot for us.

Machine-guns were removed from the jeeps and the vehicles left in the courtyard with a two-man guard. The rest of us entered the house, placed the machine-guns near windows on the exposed sides and secured the heavy shutters on the first floor. Thus safeguarded against surprises, the men turned in for the night. "Turned in" is the correct term because it was some time before they actually went to sleep, that time being devoted to finishing off a keg of fine beer thoughtfully left behind by the fleeing enemy and fortunately overlooked by the pursuing "doggies."

We had left markers at key points along our route and displayed one on the building we occupied. They led Larry Brown, Carl Fiebig and Gerry Beatson to us. Before hailing us, they took suitable cover. One of our sentries in the yard heard "Lightning-A, hey!" coming from the direction of a dead Tiger tank and reported it. The three were then admitted after we were sure of their identity. They brought a packet of aditional intelligence from George Eckman.

Next day, the Alsos task force reached Stadtilm right on the heels of the retreating Germans because no U.S. soldiers had invested the town and only a small detachment had passed close to it. Our armored jeeps and cars gave me a feeling of being secure from snipers. And though the vehicles afforded little protection against anything heavier than rifle fire, they had a reassuring psychological effect.

The inhabitants looked stunned as we entered. Carl Fiebig left the column to contact the town administration and establish our control. Without stopping to ask questions, the rest of us headed for the school where Diebner's laboratory was located. We parked in the school courtyard so soon after the Germans had pulled out that we caught several staff members who had taken refuge behind its walls.

The first jeep to enter carried four men, three of whom took stations permitting them to oversee the high walls of the

courtyard. The second jeep pulled to the side and two of its crew took charge of the entrance; the other vehicles then moved in with the exception of the armored cars. I stationed one of those half a block down the street and the other just short of the school, their heavy machine-guns ready for action. Two men started walking out of the courtyard but were stopped by our guards. When one put up an argument, he was brought to me. He declared arrogantly that he was the senior member of the staff and resented being treated in a high-handed manner by common soldiers.

By that time Fred Wardenberg, Jim Lane and Dave Griggs had taken over the laboratory. After a quick inspection for booby traps, conducted by Gerry Beatson with the assistance of Pvt. Linton—who fervently hoped that Gerry knew his business—our scientific sleuths were permitted to go to work. As they established themselves in one of the offices and started reviewing documents, I began a detailed inspection of the premises. At one end of the building I found a garage-sized door behind which, in a cave-like room, were huddled a number of men, women and children.

In response to questioning, the men told me the group consisted of townsfolk who had hidden in the cave for protection against shells and bullets they feared would be flying around. They denied any connection with the laboratory. But something smelled rotten to me. The women appeared unduly concerned when I demanded their identification cards. And I noticed signs of recent excavation. Suspicious, now, I recalled seeing some large blocks of material outside, and checked them. They were of some paraffin-like substance. This prompted me to make a closer inspection of the inside. I found some black briquettes.

As I picked one up, one of the men said hurriedly, "That's only coal."

Another man started on a complicated explanation of the briquettes and it was obvious he was trying to mislead me.

Our scientists checked the cave and confirmed my guess. The dark briquettes were uranium metal in the form used in an atomic pile, and the paraffin blocks were of the kind used to line such a pile. We had hit something big!

The four men we held turned out to be physicists, members of the laboratory staff. They had thought to escape the notice of our military forces by remaining in the laboratory with their families. But they had soon guessed that the labo-

ratory was our objective. The pit they had been digging was to have been used for construction of a pile. But there was evidence that the project had been abandoned after the digging had started. Later we unearthed a smaller pit with a heavy lead cover. It contained a small amount of radium.

Our finds were considered of such significance that Dave Griggs was flown back to Heidelberg in a spotter plane provided by one of the divisions. From there he flew to Paris, then started back to Stadtilm with Sam Goudsmit. Dave landed in a small field where we had a jeep waiting. There was and still is a difference of opinion as to whether he had stopped taxiing before our chief scientist leaped out. But we all agreed that the prop was still turning when Sam ran for the jeep, so anxious was he to get to the laboratory. Two British technical experts, Commander Welch and Wing Commander Cecil, arrived that day with a second and larger Alsos convoy commanded by Lt. Gustavos Toepel.

On 12 April our scientific group, now numbering six, launched an exhaustive investigation. Interrogation of the German staff revealed that Dr. Gerlach had been gone for some time. But the fact that he, the chief coordinator for Nazi atomic research activity, had had his office in Stadtilm was significant information. We also learned that Diebner, with some of his key personnel and considerable material from the cave, had been evacuated by SS troops. The rumor was that they had been moved to an area somewhere in the "Bavarian Redoubt."

Stadtilm was the most disorganized town we had yet encountered. Even basic facilities were lacking. We had to use our Coleman field lamps and candles for light.

Displaced persons outnumbered the inhabitants, causing further complications. While usually we did not interfere in such problems, since the Germans themselves were responsible for the rioting and suffering, in this case I did take a hand. Inebriated DP's were trying to tear the town apart. Carl Fiebig learned they were not getting their booze from looted wine cellers; they were draining a railroad tank car loaded with industrial alcohol. Already two men had died and one had been blinded. I called together the burgomeister and the DP leaders, and ordered the tank car emptied, and in general laid down the law.

Most of our operational group returned to Heidelberg on 14 April, leaving Gus Toepel in command at Stadtilm. The

documents and materials found there, considered of great value, were flown to Paris on a C-47 from the airfield at Erfurt captured just a few hours earlier.

Arriving at our base, I found a group of distinguished visitors awaiting me there. They included Sir Charles Hambro, top advisor on raw materials to the British Government, a giant of a man with a jovial disposition; Michael Perrin, assistant director of Tube Alloys, the equivalent of our Manhattan Project; his assistant, David Gattiker; and Colonel John Lansdale.

After Alsos had broken the ice by finding the first samples, information provided by Army Intelligence, and particularly Tony Calvert's analysis of numerous reports from our group and others, indicated that a major portion of the uranium ore evacuated from Belgium by the Nazis might be stored in the Stassfurt area. The newly arrived VIP's were anxious to go there.

Because of the important status of our British visitors, I considered it necessary to take charge of the Stassfurt trip. That was cutting the time pretty close, for General Harrison had told me that we would be moving into the Black Forest area of Wurtemberg at any moment. While our convoy was being prepared, I had a chance to discuss with Bob Blake our plans for the sortie into Wurtemberg and beyond in search of the materials and men representing the last-ditch Nazi atomic effort. That operation we titled "Big." The men were placed on thirty-minute alert and, if called on to move, would be under Blake's charge until I could join them.

On 15 April the Stassfurt task force moved out and reached its destination. I dropped off its combat vehicles at Heidelberg to be serviced for Operation Big. They were not required in Stassfurt because we would be supported there by the 83rd Infantry Division. Once the city was under Division control, our task force could get along without me.

After much uranium ore had been located in various caves, SHAEF itself designated a truck company to remove the material to Hanover where British Royal Air Force planes were to fly it out. But the amount proved so great—more than 1,000 tons—that only a part was flown out; the rest was hauled to Antwerp by rail for shipment by sea.

Again, the success of an Alsos operation had a decided effect on the Allied outlook concerning Nazi capabilities.

Thus, following the Stassfurt affair, General Groves stated in a memorandum to General Marshall:

> The capture of this material, which was the bulk of uranium supplies available in Europe, would seem to remove definitely any possibility of the Germans making use of an atomic bomb in this war.

There was no further reason for my remaining in Stassfurt and every reason for my being in Heidelberg.

We pulled into Alsos Forward on 19 April to find it churning. The first words we heard from the men were, "You're just in time. We're getting ready to pull out."

CHAPTER XXI

Operation Big

Because the airborne drop had been called off a number of problems had developed. Word from 6th Army Group was that General Devers had decided to send in a ground task force. He had sent word for me to report to him immediately upon my return. Bob Blake accompanied me.

There I learned that overall plans had already been worked out and instructions were on the way to XXI Corps. A 6th Army Group Task Force was being formed to be commanded by me, designated Task Force A. Its mission was to seize the Hechingen-Bisingen area. The XXI Corps was to provide two infantry battalions, highly mobile, and one armored cavalry squadron, to form Task Force A.

An Alsos unit was to be attached to that force with the direct mission of capturing Nazi atomic research scientists and facilities: our Operation Big. Because the strength of Task Force A insured reasonable security, it was decided to have the scientists accompany the operational group.

Task Force A was to be under control of the Commanding General, 6th Army Group. The importance given the operation could be judged by the fact that General Devers kept General Eisenhower's headquarters informed of the progress of the planning. It was apparent that the scientists and the military in the theater, as well as in Washington and London, were keeping a close watch on Operation Big. London's interest became evident when Sir Charles Hambro sent word that he was to head the British group accompanying the Alsos spearhead. His group included Michael Perrin, Lt. Col. Percy Rothwell—a newcomer to Alsos—David C. Gattiker, Eric Welch and Wing Commander Cecil. The U. S. specialists were Fred Wardenberg, James Lane, Carl Baumann, Dave Griggs, Lt. Col. Edwin V. Foran (QMC), Capt. William Cro-

martie and Lt. Col. John Lansdale, the latter representing General Groves. This was the first operation for Mickey Thurgood, an Army photographer newly assigned to Alsos.

Bob Blake acted as Deputy Commander and Operations Officer of the Alsos contingent. It was he who briefed General Devers on our plans. As usual, our first consideration was the safety of the scientists. Because of the exposed situation in which we would find ourselves, one infantry company was given the specific job of guarding and supporting the science people. The company was to remain at the jump-off point until the scientific group was brought up by Reg Augustine, who was to command the second echelon.

I was happy to learn that General Devers had designated Gene Harrison to accompany Task Force A as his representative and observer. This further underlined the importance of the operation. It was clear that regardless of all previous intelligence, our scientists and the American and British military leaders anxiously awaited the results of our Operation Big. As I was leaving his office General Devers, with the pleasant smile so characteristic of him, repeated words I had heard before. "Well, Pash, I hope you hit the jackpot."

Back at Alsos Forward, I was given additional proof of the interest of the British. Commander Welch asked that I include in our convoy a British signal van and crew. He wanted to maintain direct communication with the British 21st Army Group and the War Office. I did not go along with the request. I could not hold still for the possibility that the British brass might get vital information before our own brass had a chance to pass on it. We had quite a hassle about that. I finally told the Commander he could be assured that any message he wished to transmit would be sent via Sixth Army Group, and that he had one hour in which to decide whether he accompanied us without his signal van or remained behind. Eric Welch accompanied us.

During the afternoon of 20 April, the Alsos combat element, including our armored vehicles, took off from Alsos Forward. Nine men with three jeeps from Alsos Rear moved out to augment this group. Eddie Dolan drove the first armored car. He and his assistant driver, Linton, had checked every moving part with the thoroughness of Swiss watchmakers. Corp. Harold Brown was in the well, his ammunition precisely stacked, swinging the heavy machine-gun on its steel ring to insure its smooth movement.

A lot of spit and polish had gone into Forward's preparations, as though the men had been preparing for a review. Perhaps the news that a general was going with us had had a stimulating effect.

When Gene Harrison did join us, he brought two items of information about the French.

First, the Germans were putting up stiff resistance at Stuttgart and the French were having a difficult time dislodging them. The French were upset by the battle situation. Second, they had seriously objected when General Devers had informed them that upon its fall, Stuttgart was to come under control of the Seventh Army. The directive received by the French First Army Commander required him to stay out of the Hechingen-Bisingen area, and to advance in the direction of Schwenningen-Tuttlingen and east along the Swiss border.

The plan for our operation called for an advance from east of Stuttgart in a southwesterly direction along the western foothills of the heavily forested Swabian Range. The French were coming out of the Black Forest, advancing directly to the east. If the French failed to dislodge the Germans from Stuttgart it would cause us to move right across the rear of the Germans line. We could well be run over by the Germans if they went into a rapid withdrawal.

But we figured there was little danger of that. The French never did advance with much vigor, in our opinion. The thing was that we did not want the French to get wind of the purpose of our special force. So we had to watch them as well as the Germans. Having leaned on the Americans throughout the war, now that the enemy was on the run they were feeling their oats and had become pompous in their attitude if not impressive in their results.

The column was fully assembled by three P.M. They were starting out on the big one—their Old Man was commanding the Army Group task force—a general officer they counted as a friend was along to represent the highly respected Commanding General—all of this had a visible effect on the men.

After checking with Reg Augustine on his plans for bringing up the second echelon, General Harrison and I followed the column in his sedan. This was a treat for Sergeant Holt, the General's driver, who had heard wild stories from such specialists in same as Eddie Dolan, Joe Lusnia and Gerry Beatson. Today Holt was going into action with Alsos! It would be his biggest thrill of the war.

But two hours out of Heidelberg, the General's car broke down. And it wasn't the only thing that broke down. The weather became nasty. Holt's spirits sank because he had to remain with the car and might miss the operation. Sleet and rain made the rest of us miserable. The roads, bad enough in good weather, became slippery and unsafe.

The XXI Corps Headquarters was reached late that night in a driving snowstorm. Overhead power cables in the little community were sagging dangerously because of accumulated ice. The men in the wells of the armored cars had suffered most because their locations compared well with the interiors of refrigerators. A guide from the office of the Headquarters Commandant assigned us a badly battered house near the motor pool. After the vehicles were placed within the guarded area and the men taken to their billets, I joined Harrison in the Chief of Staff's van. General Devers had already talked to the Corps Commander to confirm arrangements. We were scheduled to move at four A.M. for a rendezvous with the Division combat elements, at which time the commanders of the three units forming the force were to be briefed on the details of the operation.

It was a few minutes past midnight when I left Gene Harrison in the van and returned to the unit. The men bedded down. They were trying for some relaxation, which they needed more than sleep.

It seemed to me that I had just closed my eyes when a knock on the battered door aroused me.

"General Harrison would like to see you right away in the motor pool. And he wants the men up, ready to move," came through the door.

"What is he trying to do?" I demanded, now almost awake and quite put out as I checked the time. "See if Alsos can react like a line unit? Why, I—"

Another voice interrupted. "Boris, this is me Harrison. Get your men up and ready to move in twenty minutes. I'll explain later."

I was fully awake now. As I laced my boots I heard the men firing off wisecracks.

"Did the Old Man say get some sleep?" "Hell, who needs sleep?" "We're a combat outfit now." "Alsos Boy Scouts—always prepared." They scurried around, getting themselves dressed. In twenty minutes, the column was lined up. During the preparations the General had given me the picture.

"While the C/S was briefing me on the tactical situation, General Devers phoned. He's been personally following our operation from an advanced CP set up in an armored vehicle. He told me the French have launched a strong attack against Stuttgart, causing a large flow of Germans to pull back across our path. The French have already taken Horb, on the Neckar River south of Stuttgart. They captured the bridge intact and established a bridgehead on the east bank. In spite of General Dever's orders, it looks as if the French intend to push on."

The French, aware of General Dever's plans to take the Hechingen-Bisingen area, apparently suspected that his real objective was Sigmaringen, a town on the Danube River southwest of Hechingen where the Vichy Government had last been reported. At any rate, General Devers had changed plans. The XXI Corps turned to the southeast to cross the Danube east of Ulm. The VI Corps was to mop up east of Stuttgart. And we were not to approach our target area from the northeast. We were to circle Stuttgart to the north and reach Freudenstadt by seven o'clock in the morning, a run through wartorn country of more than 130 miles in about five hours. We would be faced with uncertain conditions around Stuttgart where, in the darkness, not only the foe but also the friend was to be avoided. At Freudenstadt, on the eastern slopes of the Black Forest, we were to be joined by the 1269th Combat Engineer Battalion, less Company B, commanded by Lt. Col. Wilbur White. The Battalion represented the bulk of the combat support of the 6th Army Group T-Force which was to exploit targets in Stuttgart. Remaining with only one company did not sit well with Colonel Pumpelli, never too well disposed toward Alsos.

Realizing that darkness and poor weather could cause some of our vehicles to be separated from the column, I set a rendezvous for seven A.M. at the athletic field on the southeast edge of Freudenstadt.

Shortly after seven we moved with the 1269th out of Freudenstadt and headed for Horb. Just beyond Freudenstadt, Eddie Dolan broke his arm and we were obliged to leave him in a French hospital. As we pulled out, Sergeant Holt drove up in a jeep with a major from the Sixth Army Group. General Devers had sent him to provide General Harrison with means for direct liaison with Devers' headquarters. Another indication of the keen high-level interest in our operations.

A small, deserted community on the west bank of the Neckar River, Horb had suffered considerable damage during its capture by the French. We found a beer garden in pretty good shape and set up our CP there. It was comfortable enough, we decided, to serve as a base for our second echelon soon to join us. In the meantime, with three of our men and a squad from the Combat Engineers, Bob Blake crossed the bridge for a reconnaissance. The French had about twenty men with two machine-guns on the east bank, but their main force remained on the west bank. Our problem was to keep them from moving forward toward our area.

Soon after our arrival, therefore, I requested a French sergeant to ask the commander, a major, to report to me. When he arrived, I showed him my SHAEF credentials and congratulated him on behalf of General Devers, telling him that his outstanding action in capturing the bridge and holding the Neckar River had been noted in the American headquarters. As the major swelled a bit, I continued, "The Commanding General is depending on you to hold firm on this line. There will be some changes in deployment. To avoid confusion, you should not move beyond the river or let any troops go through until I send you a message. You can say that you have these orders direct from Group Headquarters."

That did the trick for a time sufficient for our needs. Much heel-clicking and saluting lent emphasis to my instruction that the French major would hold the Neckar River line. I decided that kissing him on both cheeks was not necessary.

Bob Blake returned to report that he had made no contact with the enemy and that the inhabitants had said there were no troops in Haigerloch.

My next move was to occupy Haigerloch. One of the engineer companies supported by our two armored cars and two jeeps under the command of Bob Blake moved out in the early morning. I was about to follow when a large unit pulled in. To my surprise, Reg Augustine reported that he had brought up our second echelon. The excitement of the hunt had affected our supposedly imperturbable scientists. Emotions had prevailed over objectivity, and they had followed closer on our heels than planned.

I issued directives to the effect that the scientists were not to move out of Horb until I gave the word. To be sure that my orders would be followed by British scientists as well as

American, I spoke to Charles Hambro and asked him to take charge of the scientific group.

Haigerloch is a small, picturesque town straddling the Eyach River. As we approached it, pillowcases, sheets, towels and other white articles attached to flagpoles, broomsticks and window shutters flew the message of surrender. Our forward detachment, led by Bob Blake, had passed through the town and was waiting for us at the bridge.

While our engineer friends were busy consolidating the first Alsos-directed seizure of an enemy town, Lts. Jack Ditesheim and Gus Toepel, both assigned to Alsos from Manhattan Project, aided by Special Agents Marti Previti and Lawrence Feindt, led teams in a rapid operation to locate Nazi research facilities. They soon found an ingenious set-up that gave almost complete protection from aerial observation and bombardment—a church atop a cliff.

Hurrying to the scene, I saw a box-like concrete entrance to a cave in the side of an 80-foot cliff towering above the lower level of the town. The heavy steel door was padlocked. A paper stuck on the door indicated the manager's identity. Townspeople told us they believed secret work was being done in the place because none of them was ever allowed to approach the entrance.

"Get the fellow whose name is on that paper," I ordered. Gus Toepel and one of his men picked up an inhabitant for a guide and were off. Meanwhile Bob Blake, who had joined us, sent a message to the CO of the Engineer Battalion and another to Reg Augustine telling him to bring up the second echelon.

When the manager was brought to me, he tried to convince me that he was only an accountant. When he hesitated at my command to unlock the door, I said: "Beatson, shoot the lock off. If he gets in the way, shoot him."

The manager opened the door.

At that moment, Jim Lane and Fred Wardenberg arrived in a jeep driven by none other than Eddie Dolan—whom we had left in a French hospital with a broken arm. I frowned. There hadn't been time for Blake's messenger to reach Horb, yet here were these smiling experts. And how was it possible that Eddie was on hand? I prepared to lower the boom, beginning with Eddie. They had traveled in a lone jeep through unsecured enemy territory!

"Dolan!"

"Sir, before you say anything, may I report that my arm was set, it is in good condition, and a French hospital is a helluva place to be in. I knew you needed every man, so I borrowed a jeep from the French motor pool. Would you possibly help me straighten that out, sir? You see, I even brought these gentlemen up forward, sir."

Lucky Dolan. We were about to enter the cave, which distracted me. Since the scientists had arrived unharmed, I decided the matter could be pursued at a later date.

In the main chamber was a concrete pit about ten feet in diameter. Within the pit hung a heavy metal shield covering the top of a thick metal cylinder. The latter contained a pot-shaped vessel, also of heavy metal, about four feet below the floor level. Atop the vessel was a metal frame.

After guards had been posted to seal off the entrance and the church grounds above, Jim Lane and Fred Wardenberg started in on the German prisoner. He confirmed the fact that we had captured the Nazi uranium "machine" as the Germans called it—actually an atomic pile. I made a strong effort to conceal my emotion. Not so the learned Lane and Wardenberg. Their elation showed plainly. And it was difficult to restrain their "sedate" colleagues back in Horb when they heard of the find. In Haigerloch they wanted no part of the Hotel Post, not even the hospitality of its dining room. To the cave! But they had to wait until after supper, when I permitted the technical group led by the giant figure of Charles Hambro and composed primarily of British personnel, to talk to our "enemy technician" and inspect the cave.

Fascinated, they studied the main chamber, looked into the others. One was fitted out as a laboratory, another as a work room, the third as a supply or auxiliary room. In the latter, mounted on concrete blocks, were three cylindrical metal containers about 30 inches in diameter and 40 inches high, connected by a pipe that ran into the large chamber. Next to the containers were two electrical control boxes, one on top of the other. The lower one bore the name *Professor Gerlach* in the upper righthand corner; the upper, *Professor Diebner*. In front of the cylinders was a small blackboard on which was chalked: *Let rest be holy to mankind. Only crazy people are in a hurry.*

Was that inscription a rejection by the scientists of the prevailing Nazi philosophy? A protest by technical men against the tempo of their scientific leaders engaged in a race?

Early morning of 22 April found two groups waiting impatiently—the military to move on to the next objective and the scientists to get into the cave.

The scientists had a picnic that day. Dismantling got under way as soon as the metal cover was removed. Neatly organized in a definite pattern in the center cylinder and caldron were graphite blocks about 18 inches long, 4 inches wide, 2 inches thick. They were placed so as to keep the open center section under the frame. Our men removed the graphite blocks and stacked them for future disposition. John Lansdale busily recorded measurements. At the same time intensive interrogation of the manager and painstaking search were being conducted in an effort to uncover the uranium that had fueled, or was intended to fuel, the pile.

I could not remain longer in Heigerloch because the task force had moved in the direction of Hechingen. Hambro agreed to accept responsibility for further activity at the cave. There was still a lot to be done. The uranium and heavy water for the pile had to be located, and a report checked out that a large amount of radium was hidden in the area.

A patrol sent ahead earlier in the morning had picked up several prisoners. From them we learned that the Germans had established a replacement center in a small village a few miles down. It was being used largely as a collection point for artillery crews who had been defending the Siegfried Line and field artillery units that had lost their guns. These men were being trained as infantry replacements. The center was reported to contain about 2,000 of them. But the prisoners we had taken thus far had been unarmed and had shown no fight—which prompted me to move on.

Approaching the village, our column was greeted by ineffective small-arms fire from what looked like a large school building. Its compound formed the main section of the replacement center. After a brief exchange of fire, I called Gerry Beatson and told him that he had just volunteered to carry a white flag and a note written in German by Carl Fiebig. The note demanded that the Germans surrender.

"You mean go without a gun, Colonel?"

"Exactly."

"I don't remember volunteering. What if they start shooting?"

Harold Brown, manning a machine gun on one of the ar-

mored cars spoke up. "Then you'd better drop down, boy. Or I'll be shooting right through you."

As Gerry started toward the enemy, for once he did not display his well-known lightheartedness. His steps were firm, but exaggerated. The arm holding the pole with a white cloth attached was rigid. The boy was sure of himself, but tense.

He returned after a few minutes. "Those were the toughest fifty yards I ever walked," he said. "But if you look, you should see a hundred men following me. They surrendered."

After that encounter, we moved on toward Bisingen. At first we met only individual Germans or small groups, quite content to surrender. Four men from the engineer battalion were left with a jeep as a POW collection point. Whenever they gathered a sizable group, it would be marched to Horb. But after a while we saw coming toward us in good formation a battalion-size unit led by a lieutenant colonel.

Having picked up two more groups of German prisoners, and seeing the disintegration of the enemy forces in the area, I sent word back to Haigerloch for the remainder of the battalion to move to Hechingen with our scientists, leaving one platoon at Haigerloch.

Our entry into Bisingen was uneventful. There I left two squads and one armored car, and moved on to Hechingen. By this time General Harrison had joined us. This last phase of Operation Big was giving me quite a feeling of elation. We had first reported in November that the Nazis did not have the atomic bomb. On 23 April we had captured their atomic pile. The day afterward—now—we were making a move which, if as successful as the others, would net us the top German atomic scientists. "Be careful. Keep your feet on the ground," I admonished myself. Reg Augustine drove up to report he was picking up messages being relayed within some French unit not too far away. That should certainly help to keep my mind on our job at hand, I thought.

I quickly conferred with General Harrison. Soon Reg was transmitting my instructions to the French. "On orders of Colonel Pash, commanding Task Force A and accompanied by General Harrison, personal representative of the Commanding General, 6th Army Group, you will stop any advance into the area north of the Rottwell-Sigmaringen line. We are encountering opposition and might require artillery action."

The recognition signal from the Frenchman relieved my

mind. I had purposely given him the Sigmaringen point to allay his fears as to American intentions—we were not after the Vichy group.

An advance element of our force moved into Hechingen without opposition, and our main column closely followed. There were reports that a French unit had passed through shortly before our arrival.

The painstaking preparation for the operation—from the early intelligence efforts of Tony Calvert to the development of operational details by our men—made itself felt immediately. The combat troops promptly occupied tactical positions to counteract any enemy moves. Predetermined teams quickly seized personnel and installations on our list.

For example, a woolen mill housing the Kaiser Wilhelm Physics Institute was our primary building target. The Institute—where the Task Force CP was set up—and six other buildings were occupied within fifteen minutes after our entry. German scientists were being brought in by the time the CP was ready to operate. Within half an hour, all scientists on our priority list except Dr. Heisenberg were in custody. Before the day was over we had taken some twenty-five scientists and technicians, including Doctors von Wiezsacher, Korsching and Bagge.

Each captive was placed under guard in a separate room of the woolen mill. We wanted to be sure they had no chance to agree on a story. Membership cards for the "Rendezvous Club" were printed and issued to each Alsos man. They were signed by me as "secretary" and countersigned by Bob Blake. The cards were required for admission to Alsos-controlled areas.

Initial interrogation of the technical captives added two more urgent targets to our list. The most important was the hamlet of Urfeldt in the Bavarian Alps. Two weeks before we entered Hechingen, Dr. Heisenberg had left for Urfeldt on his bicycle to visit his family. Carl Fiebig was assigned the task of gathering information upon which to plan a quick operation in pursuit of the No. 1 German atomic scientist. The second target was Tailfingen, where Doctors Hahn and von Laue had been conducting research.

Geographically, all this turned our interest in the direction of Siegmaringen. I directed Larry Brown to probe to the south of Bisingen with an armored car and two armed jeeps. Eddie Dolan, who took off his splint and insisted that he did

not have a broken arm, pleaded for the driver's seat of the armored car. Because he was the best man we had for the job, I let him have it.

Events moved fast. Our Bisingen team reported that the office and small laboratory of Dr. W. Dallenbach had been seized. The scientist had left for Switzerland, but before leaving had posted a sign identifying his installation as belonging to a foreign government. It was expected that by next morning Hechingen would be under full control and word to that effect was sent to Haigerloch, ordering our group to come in.

Two incidents occurred to liven up the day. The first one involved relations between the Germans and the Displaced Persons. Several thousand of the latter lived in dilapidated camps in the area and worked as slave-laborers in the industrial plants. The DP's in one of the mills producing cloth were all set to take over and give vent to their stored-up hatred. They could not be blamed, but we could not afford a condition of lawlessness. Eddie Dolan was in the plant at the time, and with a friendly but firm hand he stopped what could have developed into a riot. In appreciation, the manager asked Eddie to select a bolt of cloth for himself. Eddie chose some red, white and blue cloth and had some women prepare a set of three neckerchiefs for each of the Alsos men.

The second incident, one of chain reaction, was rather disturbing. Causing me to review my decision to bring up the scientists, it kept me up late.

I was ready to turn in when a messenger hurried in from Bisingen to report that our unit there had been attacked by the Werewolves, as the Nazi underground was called, or some other variety of diehard. When I checked with Colonel White, he had already sent reinforcements and had put his battalion on full alert. The messenger was followed immediately by Gerry Beatson, who reported that a patrol had moved out of Bisingen in the direction of Thanheim. As they neared that community, two German soldiers were spotted near a well.

"They saw us and ran," Gerry said. "Soon afterward, all hell broke loose. The Krauts lobbed mortar shells, opened up with machine-guns. I told Eddie to turn the armored car around because Lieutenant Brown was ordering withdrawal. Well, Colonel, the car didn't move—with me stuck in it, a perfect target." Gerry always made matters sound urgently personal. "I hollered for Eddie to get the hell outa there. You

know what he yells back at me? An engineer soldier we had taken along was down flat on his belly at the bottom of the car. Eddie couldn't get his feet to the controls. . . ."

"Where's Lieutenant Brown now?" I interrupted.

"He stopped in Bisingen to help our boys there. They were having some trouble."

"You mean with the Werewolves?"

"No, sir. With the local people. Some tried to fight us."

"All right. Now tell me where you got that engineer."

"As we were leaving on the patrol, this kid asked if he could go with us. I told him to get his rifle and climb into the assistant driver's seat. I guess he never was in a fight before. When the Krauts opened up, he got scared and went down."

Carl Fiebig, whom I had sent to investigate, reported back that the outbreak in Bisengen probably had been touched off by the initial skirmish with the Germans. He hadn't been able to determine whether that brush had been an organized action by Werewolves or army elements, or a spontaneous flare. At any rate, we knew that the Bisingen burgomeister and his staff had been involved in the second fight. We took them into custody and the townspeople were warned that another outbreak would bring severe reprisal.

The situation was not exactly to my liking and I was worried about the safety of our scientists. But the stakes were big and I intended to push on to Tailfingen the next day. Our plan called for a task force composed of a company from the 1269th and the headquarters platoon, plus the two armored cars and four jeeps from the Alsos unit. Everything was set to move at eight o'clock the next morning. Word was sent to Haigerloch to have Fred Wardenberg, Jim Lane and Dr. Carl Baumann ready to join us.

Eddie called for us at six in the morning to drive us to the mess.

The men finished breakfast in high spirits. I told them they had done an exceptionally fine job, carrying our operation far beyond the expectations of the top Allied commanders and myself. "Men, we shall complete that job today."

CHAPTER XXII

Alsos Hits the Jackpot

At eight o'clock on 24 April, the Tailfingen-bound Alsos Task Force moved out for what was to be the final phase of Operation Big. I preceded the group in my jeep, accompanied by Larry Brown, with Gerry Beatson in the second jeep. I wanted personally to check the situation at Bisingen as we went through and be certain that any danger from that mutinous community was past.

A couple of miles outside the Thanheim, from where our patrol had received fire the night before, we found a typical German *gasthaus* and beer garden. This was a good place for us to await the arrival of the rest of our force.

A slight elevation formed a ridge that concealed us from observation from the area of Thanheim. Entering the *gasthaus* with Carl, I asked the proprietor if his telephone was in working order. Receiving an affirmative reply, I picked up the phone and asked the Thanheim operator for "*den Burgermeister, bitte.*" After a short wait a man replied, identifying himself as the *Burgermeister*.

"I am Colonel Pash of the American Army," I said in German. "My lieutenant, Herr Fiebig, will transmit to you my order."

Carl took the phone and stated that at exactly eleven o'clock the American Task Force would move on Thanheim. The Mayor was to advise me immediately whether the town would surrender. If so, a white flag was to be hoisted at eleven o'clock on the town hall and white was to be flown from the homes. Any resistance would cause the town to be wiped out by artillery fire. Any troops in town must be informed of our conditions and agree to the Mayor's decision, so he had better talk it over with the troop commander.

Carl concluded, "I'll wait fifteen minutes for your reply."

"Thanheim surrenders," came the instant decision over the phone.

"The Colonel instructs you and the other town officials to wait for him in front of the city hall."

When our entire force was assembled and General Harrison had joined me in the *gasthaus*, I handed him a beer-mug with a German helmet for the cap.

"General, may this always remind you that Thanheim has surrendered to Task Force A by phone."

Shortly before H-hour, two young chaps were picked up as they walked toward us from the direction of Thanheim. They claimed to be Polish DP's. I questioned them in German, but listened hard as they talked to each other in Polish while eating the K rations we gave them. They were not aware that I knew Polish. I heard them discuss how lucky were those German soldiers who had remained in Thanheim and had let the retreating unit take their arms. This was important news. I felt a lot more confident about investing the town.

"I'll be in the first armored car, Gene," I said. "Will you please ride in the second one and take over if anything happens to me? When we get into town I'll dismount and walk to the city hall."

"All right, Boris," the General responded. "But you'd better let me walk with you. If we are hit, Colonel White can handle any situation."

Company A of the 1269th Combat Engineer Battalion had deployed on both sides of the road leading into Thanheim. At precisely eleven o'clock, the first armored car mounted the ridge and came in sight of the town. The skirmish line moved forward with bayonets fixed. Pieces of white cloth were visible in windows and on flagpoles.

We walked toward the town square, followed by our troops who were inspecting the houses as they advanced. With the exception of a few elderly folk peering at us from windows, the entire population was gathered at the square. The *Burgermeister* expressed the hope that the Americans would be lenient.

Our column proceeded through Thanheim on the way to Tailfingen. Shortly we were climbing up the forested slope toward the pass. The road entered a densely wooded area extending parallel to a heavy stream and a narrow, swampy val-

ley considerably below on the right. There we sighted a French column coming from the direction of the pass. The French captain said that the road was blocked near the pass and they had been forced to detour. From the captain's agitation, I judged that his column was operating against time. A quick look at the map suggested that the French had come up from the southwest and probably thought they were racing us to Sigmaringen.

Within ten minutes we had reached the roadblock. Our patrols ahead reported no contact with the enemy. But the Germans had outdone themselves with that roadblock and it was not surprising that the French had hesitated to tackle it. Tree trunks, 3 and 4 feet in diameter and 30 feet long, had been placed in rows across the road, supported by logs 2 feet thick driven into the ground.

Looking down into the valley, one could see the French column winding along the streambed, two civilian sedans in the lead. The French plan was immediately clear. They had descended to the stream with the intention of using it to bypass the barrier and get ahead of us.

"Colonel White, I'll give you ten minutes to take that barricade apart," I said, starting down the slope toward the valley. "Signal me when you're through."

The French unit was having a devil of a time trying to move over the swampy terrain of the valley. The captain walked up the slope to meet me and, as I suspected, to stop me from descending further. *"Qui est votre commandant?"* I asked.

"Major Bonet, mon Colonel," the captain replied, trying to block my descent.

But I would not be put off. I moved down the slope until within shouting distance of the first car, which was being nursed along the quagmire by the major.

"Major Bonet, attention!" I called.

At first there was no response.

"Quand un colonel dit avec vous, vous prendre attention!" ("When a colonel speaks with you, you assume attention!")

The French was pretty poor but it had the desired effect. Major Bonet stopped his car in the middle of the ooziest bog I have seen outside of Alaska. The other vehicles in the column halted also. By the time Bonet got out, the vehicles had sunk to their axles and they kept sinking. He was impatient but had to be polite. I was very solicitous. I inquired about

the success of his mission and asked if he had done any reconnaissance in the area.

He had had no contact with the enemy. While reporting to me he kept looking up at Colonel White's Engineers, who were tearing apart the barricade.

The French major stood there, not daring to move. His vehicles were settling deeper every minute. In seven minutes the barricade had disappeared. Colonel White signaled that the road was clear. Patrols had been sent ahead. Our column started moving through the pass on its way to Tailfingen.

Among the Frenchmen there was, as usual, a lot of talk and gesticulation. Much time would pass before any of their vehicles could move. Talk about stuck in the mud!

We pushed into Tailfingen in the early afternoon, moving directly to the former school building in which Dr. Otto Hahn's laboratory was located. Colonel White swiftly secured the immediate area. Bob Blake contacted the city authorities for me, informing them that they would be held responsible for any act unfriendly to the Allies.

We found Dr. Hahn and his entire staff assembled in the laboratory. He was informed that he was in the custody of the U.S. Army and would be expected to cooperate with us.

General Harrison and I, with two jeeploads of men from the 1269th, made a survey of the town then returned to our CP set up in one of the armored cars. We were waiting for Hahn and his associate, von Laue, to assemble their belongings when the French major we had left in the valley drove up, saluted stiffly, and announced that he had orders to take the town.

"Why, Major," I said, "Tailfingen was taken three hours ago. But I'm leaving shortly. You will be notified, so that you can take over. That is all." He wanted to say more but I closed the issue, leaving him unhappy.

In Henchingen, the entire Alsos scientific contingent was interrogating the German scientists and trying to locate significant lab reports and documents. At first the enemy scientists had disclaimed any knowledge of the whereabouts of the latter. But Hahn unhesitatingly gave the location of those of which he was aware. Moreover, armed with the receipts for documents shipped to the Hechingen that had been picked up in Strasbourg and Stadtilm, it was not too difficult for our specialists to beat down the resistance of the Germans. Finally the most reluctant and haughty of the group, von Weiz-

sacker, decided to cooperate, which fact indirectly contributed to the chagrin of some of our scientists.

He reported that a large package of documents, wrapped in protective covering, was secreted in a drum that had been dropped in a cesspool of a "Chick Sales" outside the home of a friend.

Our scientists, armed with long poles, were there in no time. They were going to bring up this prize. What they overlooked was that a pole stuck six feet into a cesspool, when withdrawn, would retrieve more than the drum. They found that out not theoretically but through practical experimentation. The drum was dropped back in and the military was called to the rescue with the protection of gloves and the cleansing power of a stream of water. Lieutenant Topel and Marti Previti conquered the filthy job.

Upon our return we learned that the secreted uranium of the Heigerloch pile, as well as the supply of heavy water, was buried near an old water-driven grist mill outside town. A high-level excavation detail, including such men as Michael Perrin, Jim Lane, Colonel Lansdale and Commander Welch, assigned the actual pilot digging to the German technician from Heilgetloch. This procedure insured us against booby-traps. Soon we recovered three drums of heavy water. Excavating on the edge of a plowed field, we next struck a heavy wooden shield, the removal of which exposed nearly the entire core of the Nazi atomic pile in uranium ingots.

The uranium metal was so heavy that the men formed a human chain to pass the ingots one by one to a spot from which they could be loaded on trucks. When they were stacked ready for loading, it was hard to realize that the small pile, measuring not more than two cubic feet, would weigh about two tons. The 1269th provided trucks that hauled the uranium and heavy water, along with recovered graphite, to SHAEF Scientific Section for transhipment to the United States.

Thus ended Operation Big.

With the exception of Doctors Heisenberg, Gerlach and Diebner, Alsos had taken into custody every German scientist whose name appeared on the "wanted" list.

And the German atomic pile, with all related equipment and documents, were in American hands.

Upon receiving my report that "Alsos has hit the jackpot,"

General Harrison immediately sent a message to General Devers stating, "Boris Pash has hit the jackpot."

This news electrified Heidelberg. General Devers relayed the message to General Eisenhower without changing the wording.

General Eisenhower's radio to the Pentagon once again repeated that "Boris Pash has hit the jackpot." It added that the success of our Operation Big far exceeded our wildest hopes.

The Alpine Redoubt was our next objective—and the top German atomic scientist our target.

CHAPTER XXIII

Into the Alpine Redoubt

Operations in the Hechingen area were completed and investigations phasing out.

The 1269th Combat Engineer Battalion was to remain until relieved by an infantry battalion already on orders to take over. The 1269th had given us fine support. Colonel White and his men, in fact, had come to consider themselves a part of Alsos. The release of the area to French control was to be effected by Sam Goudsmit.

On 26 April most of our Alsos operational group started out for Heidelberg, the men already alerted for the next mission. This time we drove through Stuttgart.

We soon learned that the post-victory partisan was still very much in evidence. It was that type which had control of Stuttgart and was challenging all comers now that no one was around to take up the gauntlet. Domination of the city by the partisans prevented the French command from turning over the city to U.S. control. That the French could not cope with these irregulars became evident as we moved through the streets.

A motley crowd of armed men stopped us at one checkpoint.

"Le mot d'ordre," (the password) came from an unshaven, mean-looking chap, armed to the teeth. The rain and cold did not improve his looks or my disposition. Added to this was the fact that we did not have the password.

"Que ce' que vous voulez?" I asked, stalling.

The Frenchman kept jabbering away.

I stopped him with, *"Ah! Le mot? Oui. Le mot est etoile."*

He shook his head in disgust. *"No, no, no!"*

I reached out through the flap in the side-curtains of the jeep, drew him in close and said in a confidential tone, "Only

for you, my friend. Tonight for the Americans it is "star"—*etoile* in French. You have another word?"

He glanced at the eagles on my cap and replied just as confidentially. "For us tonight the password is Lorraine."

On 28 April we pulled into our Heidelberg base to prepare for what was to be our final mission.

The top Nazi atomic scientist, Dr. Heisenberg, was not yet in Alsos hands. Neither were Gerlach and Diebner, both last reported in Munchen. At the base was waiting a congratulatory message from Washington which also contained a reminder that Heisenberg still was a "must" target. Washington's concern—and for that matter Sam Goudsmit's—was to get Heisenberg and the others before they were killed by disgruntled SS men or captured by the Soviets. Needless to say, the latter possibility was the more disturbing.

No sooner had we hit Heidelberg than preparations were under way for the move into the Bavarian Alps and to Munchen. Dick Ham was selected to command the latter operation while I was to lead the task force into the Alps. At that time both areas were still in Nazi hands.

In discussing the operations with the men, the hazards of the undertaking were emphasized.

"Nothing's going to stop us, Colonel," volunteered Eddie Dolan, who had again injured his arm and once more was carrying it in a sling.

"Maybe the Krauts won't, Eddie-boy, but we won't get far dragging cripples with us," Gerry Beatson remarked. "Colonel, do we have to take old lame-wing along? He can't even drive a jeep, let alone fight."

"I can break your back with my one good arm—" Eddie began indignantly, but I stopped him.

"Save the fight for the Werewolves if we run into them," I advised. "You have until tomorrow noon to put everything into shape to move." Then, turning to Lieutenant Brown, I said, "Brownie, we'll take the two M-20's and two jeeps. I want Carl, Gerry and eight other men—or make it seven other men and Eddie." Eddie's face lit up. "Everyone is to be ready to roll at sun-up Tuesday. That's May Day. Lieutenant Edell should be back with the armored cars by then. If I'm gone before he gets here, tell him to take command and report with the unit at Seventh Army Headquarters not later than 1200 on 1 May."

It was my intention to work out the details of the opera-

tion with Colonels Quinn and Guthrie. A combat force was to be attached to me for the operation, and Bill Quinn had to have time to get the necessary directives from the Seventh Army to the units involved.

That evening everything was also buzzing at Rear, I found. George Eckman was to have an outfit ready for the dash to Munich to pick up Diebner and Gerlach. Every one of our men was anxious to be picked for that foray.

The uranium and other materials from Heigerloch had passed through on the way to Paris. One of the spacious mansions on Philosophienweg was being prepared for occupancy by such world-renowned scientists as Otto Hahn, von Laue and von Weigsacker, among others.

I remained at Rear for supper. Excitement was gripping everyone. Much joking and good-natured jostling took place at every table. It was like the day before the big game.

As I left the mess hall, one of the men who had joined us before the Stadtilm operation asked to talk to me.

"What's on your mind, O'Conner?"

"Well, sir, all the guys go on operations. They come back and talk about how well we do, about the towns we capture. Colonel, sir, I haven't been out of headquarters since I joined the outfit! Won't you please take me on the next operation? It may be my last chance—there's talk about the Germans soon quitting."

I promised to consider his request.

What he had said was true. He had remained at headquarters on my instructions. He was a fine soldier, but how he got into the Army I don't know. He was in his late thirties, married, had four children—and was cross-eyed. How could I be sure he would use the correct eye to sight his rifle? I did not want to be responsible for four children orphaned. Carl Fiebig had returned from General Devers' Operations Room with a report that the advance elements of the Seventh Army were still miles from our objectives—the village of Urfeldt in the Bavarian Alps and the Bavarian capital of Munchen. But that news merely caused the men selected for the operation to react like a boxer before a fight. Combat uniforms received special attention, equipment was spic and span; steps were jaunty and helmets tilted, all proclaiming a determination to achieve another successful strike by Alsos. And those to be left behind worked at feverish pitch to make their contributions to that success.

After evening mess, O'Conner reported in response to my call.

"O'Conner," I said, "get your things packed and get yourself to Forward. Tell Lieutenant Brown I want you in my unit for this operation. Do you hear me, O'Conner? Do you understand what I'm telling you?"

He saluted, turned, and tried to walk out of the room with the poise of a man under full control. But about a step-and-a-half short of the door, he yipped like a cowboy and broke into a run.

He probably never knew what was inside his bedroll and bag. He spent his remaining time getting his carbine, ammunition and other fighting equipment into proper shape. His buddies did his packing. One of our best mechanics, Walter Judkins, rolled out a jeep and with the assistance of two pals delivered the recruit to Alsos Forward.

The men all knew we were going into the Alps. They also knew we would be hunting big game. With the German army falling apart, the diehards who, according to their own philosophy, had forfeited any chance for mercy were expected to fight to the bitter end themselves showing no mercy.

Reaching the Seventh Army CP, I found it in a fluid state but quite operational. The staff group of youngsters were rapidly coping with continual dislocation of their headquarters in order to keep up with advancing combat commands spearheaded by the 10th and 12th Armored Divisions. The Hellcats (12th Armored) were trying to outrace the 10th to Innsbruck.

Amid the organized confusion, Colonels Quinn, Guthrie, Craig and Harvey, the chiefs of the general staff sections, took enough time to work out my problem—getting a covering combat force to help me gain the Alps and pick up Heisenberg.

"The 12th CP is moving today from Schwabmunchen to Lansberg," Guthrie told me. "You can catch up with them there and give this order to the G-3. I'll send a message from General Patch to General Allen telling him you're on the way to his headquarters."

Bill Quinn, who never missed an opportunity to kid me, added, "Don't get lost in the Alps. We're too busy to go looking for you."

At the Landsberg CP I learned that the Hellcats were moving in two directions, neither of which led to our objective.

Their most recent orders were to advance east and northeast to clean up the area between Lakes Ammer and Starnberger. The combat command to the south was to continue in that direction. This left the areas of Kochel and Walchensee open. But in spite of all the changes and the subsequent heavy staff work, the Seventh Army youngsters of General Patch's staff had not overlooked me. A message was waiting with information that Maj. Gen. John E. Dahlquist, 36th Infantry (Texas) Division, had been directed to place under my control two infantry battalions. I was to tell the 36th where to rendezvous.

A check of the map indicated the Armored Division was going around our objective, located in the first massive mountain spur of the publicized last-stand redoubt of Hitler. The 36th was coming into the general area but how soon its CP could be contacted was difficult to tell. On 30 April, headquarters of the 36th was reported at Landsberg. Yet I had to keep moving if the pace characterizing all previous operations was to be maintained—a pace which so far had spelled success. Was I to hold up until the infantry could join us, or should I go on in the manner of past Lightning-A operations? I decided to plunge ahead.

I felt then, and I do now, that the urgency drummed into us by Washington justified the advance; in fact, made it imperative.

At the 12th Armored there was no one I knew, no one with whom I could do a little thinking out loud. There were problems to be solved, movement plans to be considered, routes to be chosen. But when I moved out for a look around, at least I had the company of a trusted and tried Alsosian, Gerry Beatson—my trigger man.

During the Alsos campaigns I came to realize that my men, particularly George Eckman, Dick Ham, and my five close combat companions—Gerry Beatson, Bob Blake, Carl Fiebig, Nat Leonard and Eddie Dolan—always gave me assistance and support to a degree greater than expected by even a popular commander. They always tried to protect their Old Man.

It was my habit to do much thinking out loud and these men knew that comment and suggestion were permissible. As I now rode with Gerry in the jeep, my thinking was out loud and went something like this: *Seventh Army Headquarters probably would move in a day or two. But a headquarters*

that size would not be difficult to locate. The Twelfth Armored CP would also move. In fact, they might operate on the move and thus move clear out of the picture. Anyway, we had to get word to the 36th Infantry Division and establish a rendezvous with the two battalions. We also have to leave word for my unit moving down from Heidelberg. . . .

"Are we going to the Seventh Army CP, Chief?"

"That's right." My program had been shaping up in my head.

At my request, Colonel Quinn agreed to direct the 36th to have its battalions, ready for action, join me on 2 May at Kochel, from where we were to take off for the Alps. That town is located on Lake Kochel, at the start of the mountain road to the Alps and our objective, Urfeldt. As far as our outfit coming from Heidelberg was concerned, it would pick up orders at Seventh Army to meet me outside of Peiting, just south of Schongau. This would place us about thirty-five miles northwest of Kochel. In the meantime, Gerry and I were to reconnoiter the area in the direction of Kochel and be prepared to guide the unit with all possible speed.

On 2 May, the full Alsos task force skirted the Murnauer marches and joined me, moving into a district which by all indications had not yet seen any American soldiers. We did not slow our pace but we did move cautiously, particularly when we skirted wooded areas. I was anxious to reach Urfeldt that day.

In Kochel we saw few inhabitants around but we did not stop to make any serious reconnaissance. One of the armored cars was sent through the village as a show of strength, but white rags and sheets hanging from poles and windows indicated that no opposition was likely even from enemy soldiers if any were around, and by this time we worried little about the legendary Werewolves. About a mile beyond Kochel on the road to the mountains, we ran suddenly into a small American detachment deployed around a neat little hotel, the Bad Kochel, the outside walls of which bore typical Bavarian paintings. A young officer reported to me in a very professional manner.

He was Lt. Frank C. Anderson, Jr., of Butler, Pa., in command of the 36th Cavalry Reconnaissance Platoon.

While my men took a break and swapped tall stories with the other soldiers, I called together my own officers, Lieutenant Anderson and his platoon sergeant, N. J. Saviano. For a

brief moment I thought that Anderson's unit had been sent to rendezvous with me, but he had no such orders. Having told him of my need to reach Urfeldt, I asked, "Have you probed in that direction?"

"We went a short way up the mountain," he said. "But the bridge is blown, and there's just no way to get vehicles across the gorge. It's a tough mountain to climb."

"One way or another, we're going up there," I said. "Carl, borrow Lieutenant Anderson's sergeant and make a short reconnaissance. We'll join you up by the bridge. I want to see if it can be repaired, and how soon."

Just then a man came in to inform me that a German major general was staying in a home half a mile farther along the lake shore. Apparently he was hiding out there, and must have gotten word that an American colonel was in Kochel with a unit. He wanted to surrender but was ill. I had figured that Eddie Dolan, with his arm in a sling, would not get much excitement out of our operation but now I saw a chance to throw some his way.

Dolan walked out of the inn as though in command of a division. His face was beaming, his bearing jaunty.

In twenty minutes he returned with the Nazi general, who was sick of nothing much except the war. He was turned over to Lieutenant Anderson with instructions to send him back to Division Headquarters.

Talks with Anderson led me to conclude tentatively that there were no Germans in the area with much fight left in them. Our POW informed us that no organized troops other than a small SS unit had passed through Kochel in the last two days, and he doubted that there were many in the mountain area. But there were some in the mountains southwest of Kochel, particularly in the Jachenau district where until recently a major headquarters had been located. The general also told us that an American writer who had turned Nazi—Collin Ross, author of the book *Unzere American*—was living with his wife and son in Urfeldt. This was disturbing. With an American fanatic in the area and diehard storm troopers roaming the mountain forests, the loss of our top prioriety target during the last few days of the war became an unpleasant possibility.

I had to get up that mountainside quick and capture Heisenberg, along with any documents or materials he might have. That was our final task. Its accomplishment would

complete what I had been given to understand was the most important single intelligence mission of the war. Nothing was going to stop me from getting to Urfeldt that day.

Jack Edell, Anderson and I drove the forty yards up the road leading to Urfeldt and reached the destroyed bridge. The Germans had done a good job, dumping it into the deep gorge it had spanned. Carl Fiebig reported that there was little chance of utilizing any of the remaining bridge structure even as a base on which to build another one. The best we could hope for was to have Anderson contact Division Headquarters and request an engineer unit for the job. We learned that the bridge had been destroyed by some Nazi teen-agers who considered themselves Werewolves. After blowing up the bridge, they were supposed to have retreated into the foothills and moved east toward Jachenau.

Carl Fiebig and three men reconnoitered the area. They found a path leading up the mountainside.

Some twenty years later Frank Anderson described the events of that day in these words:

The weather was bad and the Germans were worse. We had gotten as far as Kochel and I decided to rest my men. Then this outfit pulls in with a colonel in command. We couldn't recognize the markings on their vehicles. The colonel comes up to me, asks a lot of questions about the situation, inspects the blown bridge, and then tells me that he and his men are going up that mountainside on foot. He asks me to give him some of my men. The guy's crazy. Who wants to climb those snow-covered mountains with the Nazis taking pot-shots at you. He's sure going to get into a helluva mess. But if that man is crazy enough to go up, I think why shouldn't we be crazy enough to go up with him?

The way I remember it, Lieutenant Anderson took a good hard look at me, relaxed and replied: "Sir, I can spare you a detachment of ten men. I suppose you would like to have me lead my men?"

"No question about it, Lieutenant. I'd very much like to have you with me." Now for some details. I turned to Edell. "Jack, the armored-car crews can remain here to support the recon boys, if necessary. Eddie Dolan will be in charge of our men. Lieutenant Anderson's sergeant will take charge of the entire outfit down here. The rest of us will climb up that mountain. . . ."

I could hear Gerry Beatson not far away commenting to

Eddie Dolan, "Listen to the Old Man. You see all that snow on the hills?"

"We'll send three men ahead," I continued, "fanned out as best they can. They will go fifty yards and let the next three go through and fan out. The first three will wait until the column goes through, and close in the rear. The last two men in line will space out to cover the rear. I'll lead the way. Anderson, you bring up the rear."

I told Anderson further: "Have your sergeant get word to the Division to send up an engineer outfit fast with supplies and equipment. And if the infantry battalions reach here before we return, have the sergeant give the CO this message." I handed him an envelope containing a brief account of what had taken place, and instructions to move one battalion to Urfeldt without delay.

Dolan was left behind and given the job to prod the engineers when they arrived—a bitter pill for Eddie.

Our invading "force" of nineteen men was now assembled. We bore no resemblance to conventional mountain-climbers. Our packs were discarded. Our headgear did not sport the frills and pins the Bavarian mountaineers wore on their hats. We looked more like Pancho Villa bandits, with ammunition tucked in pockets and in canvas bandoliers slung across our shoulders. Each man carried a flask and two K rations.

The first hundred yards of the climb convinced me that we were in for a tough time. There was considerable snow on the ground, in many places reaching halfway to the knees. Within fifteen minutes one of the advance flankers probed into a crevice formed by two large rocks and flushed out two scared Germans. At a shout from him and a wave of his carbine, they dropped their guns and surrendered. Carl Fiebig questioned them, slit the waistbands of their trousers—which would forestall any desire to run or use their hands—and sent them to Kochel.

From those prisoners we learned that small groups were scattered through the woods. They could be from any of the several units which supposedly had withdrawn into the mountains for a last-ditch stand.

About a third of the way up we took three more prisoners at a trail cabin. Recognizing American troops, they came out and lined up. One of them had features and a build that made Gerry Beatson wonder if we had not run into Hitler in disguise. When I dropped back to see what was going on,

Gerry and a man from the recon unit had the German stripped to his underwear.

"If he were any kind of a big-shot," Gerry explained, "he'd be wearing better underclothes beneath the rough stuff. He looked so much like Hitler, we wanted to make sure."

Halfway up the mountain, I wished that a hidden German would take a shot at us. That would have given me an excuse to stretch out behind cover and catch my breath. The men also looked ready for a rest although not one of them, with the possible exception of O'Conner, was within twenty years of my age.

The wooded ridge of Kesselberg was topped at 4:40 in the afternoon. The panorama before us was breathtaking. Below nestled a large lake in a bowl formed by high, forested mountains.

A large hotel and a building that looked like an inn stood on the left side of the road leading into the village. The area around the buildings was fairly clear. Farther down and on the west side of the lake were homes and boathouses bordered by a clear patch of ground extending up the mountainside. Between the two groups of houses, the forest descended to the road skirting the shore. At the bottom, facing the road, was a garage or storage building, without windows or other openings allowing vision to the rear. I decided to enter Urfeldt at that point.

Two men were sent ahead from Anderson's recon platoon, since they would have had more experience than my crew in this type of operation.

The empty quiet continued as the two forward men approached the garage. I was tense in anticipation of firing, but none disturbed the still air. The immediate support group was given a signal to enter the village, and when they fanned out we saw our first inhabitants.

The innkeeper and his wife stood on the porch of their inn. He held rather casually, at shoulder height, a white tablecloth. A couple of volunteers for surrender came up from our right, one carrying a cane with a white handkerchief attached to it. It was obvious that these villagers would not have come out had there been any aggressive Nazi soldiers in the area.

The inn was the natural spot for our CP. We could have a hot meal prepared while going about our mission. The innkeeper proved jovial and willing to cooperate. He agreed to

serve us, augmenting our food with some of his own supplies. Talking with him, but without indicating any special interest, I learned the location of the homes of several prominent residents—including Heisenberg and Collin Ross. An American who had gone over to the Germans, Ross had become a leading Nazi propagandist and ideologist. His capture would be a bonus prize for us. The innkeeper volunteered the information that there had been a heavy concentration of troops, including mountain troops, in the communities east of Urfeldt but none along the west shore of the lake. The innkeeper told us also that Heisenberg had come to the lake about ten days ago. His family had spent the winter in the cabin.

Lieutenant Anderson posted guards to watch primarily to the east. Carl Fiebig and Gerry Beatson, with a soldier from the recon unit, went to pick up Ross. Larry Brown and I started for Heisenberg's cabin. But Jack Edell ran up to report that five members of the local home guard had come in to surrender, bringing an old truck and some small arms. Realizing that the jig was up, they had constituted themselves a disarmament commission and had taken the arms from residents. When, shortly afterward, two German officers on a scooter and four enlisted men in a sedan rode into town, they were stopped by our newly acquired "support force" and disarmed. Our men had the impression that those home guardsmen performed their disarming function with great satisfaction. Many a German had scores to settle with the Nazis.

A vacant house at the northwest corner of the village was selected as a POW shelter. The two German officers, dressed in sheepskin coats, seemed entirely cheerful at the prospect of entering an American POW camp.

Leaving on our mission, Larry and I spotted O'Conner. In a moment of weakness, I had included him in the unit, and now he was holding down the forward position on the road leading to the east—the critical position. Twenty-five or thirty yards behind him, on the edge of the village, was an outpost of three men from the recon platoon.

"I hope those Germans sit up in those mountains and don't try to come down," I said to Edell, who was talking with us. "Did you see who's out there to stop them?"

"O'Conner is okay, Chief," Edell said. "I've watched him work. He'll hold his own."

After another steep climb up the west slope, we reached Heisenberg's cabin. He was waiting on the veranda.

At that moment, I took a deep breath. Alsos was about to close the book on one of the most successful intelligence missions of the war—or so I thought.

Heisenberg invited us into his cabin. After introducing myself, I told him it was necessary for me to take him into custody.

"I'll have to deliver you to Heidelberg," I said. "Do you have any papers or material relating to your laboratory work?"

Heisenberg sighed, then introduced me to his wife and two small children. The wife was stunned, the children curious.

Heisenberg produced three folders and was about to ask me to sit down when the sound of small-arms fire interrupted us. Something had gone haywire.

"You stay here," I said to Jack Edell. "See that nothing happens to him." I ran down the slope toward the lake.

Apparently the Germans east of the hamlet had not seen us, or had assumed that only an advance American scout or two had entered the area. At any rate, a large armed group had emerged from the woods seventy-five yards ahead of O'Conner and had trotted toward the village. O'Conner had called "Halt!" just once. The Germans had increased their pace. O'Conner had opened fire with his carbine. He had hit three men. Two of them had dropped beside the road. The third had hobbled back toward the woods. The rest of the rushing Germans had stopped and seemed now about to offer a fight. But our three-man outpost opened up, the staccato of its automatic weapon carrying over the lake. That was all the Germans wanted. They fled into the cover of the woods, leaving two dead and several prisoners of whom two were wounded. I was surprised and proud of O'Conner's behavior.

But that action was far from over. I reached the east end of the village in time to glimpse the Germans fleeing. Their retreat was a relief. We were in a precarious position and my mission was not to hold Nazi real estate or make Nazi corpses. As a matter of fact, we could not hope to hold our own against any large force of diehard Nazis for we lacked heavy armament. If the Germans chose to fight it out, any lightly armed unit moving up the mountainside from Kochel would reach Urfeldt in time only to make use of its Graves Registration unit. We were already in Urfeldt, but our job was to get out with Heisenberg and his documents.

Lieutenant Anderson, who had commanded his men efficiently, gave me the details of the engagement. He also

asked permission to return with his men to Kochel because he was supposed to be on a reconnaissance mission assigned to him by his division commander.

He and his men moved out about 6:30 in the evening, leaving me with seven effectives in an extremely exposed position. Probably it would have been wise to pull out with Anderson—but Heisenberg was still at large and I did not intend to lose him.

I placed O'Connor, in whom I had developed considerable confidence, and another man to cover the two roads approaching Urfeldt along the lake shore. I took a chance on the road from Kochel up the mountain being relatively safe because the Germans knew we had come from that direction. Our other men were to move about the area bounded by hotel, inn and boathouse to give any observer the impression of a number of men on guard rather than the same one walking back and forth. When any man left a position, he called back instructions or messages to imaginary soldiers to further convince possible observers of our numbers.

Early that evening three more officers and some home guards came in to surrender. They brought in a few arms, including a German submachine-gun.

But prisoners worried me. It was getting dark and more Germans could be expected to come in to give up. If they outnumbered us, they might try to fight. In any case, I hated to weaken my force by detailing men to guard the captives.

Another unpleasant development was reported by Carl Fiebig and Gerry Beatson on their mission. They had broken into Ross's locked cabin, coming on a sight shocking even to those young combat veterans.

Apparently having realized that his cause was lost, Hitler's American supporter could not bear to face his countrymen. Our two men found the bodies of a woman and a boy, fully dressed, in the breakfast room beside that of a man who apparently had poisoned them before blowing his brains out. I certainly did not want this information getting out just then, because it was difficult to judge what effect it would have on the civilians and SS troops in the area.

Events continued to move fast. Soon after Anderson and his men left, two German officers marched toward the village to discuss surrender terms. Carl Fiebig, the first to get to them, told me they spoke English. I did not want them enter-

ing the village proper and directed that they be taken to the hotel next to the inn. Jack Edell, Larry Brown and Gerry Beatson accompanied me to the hotel.

The taller of the pair said: "Sir, we have been sent by our commander to request your surrender terms. Most of our troops have come from the Eastern front and our homes are in that area. We understand that you turn your prisoners over to the Russians. If that is the case, we might as well keep on fighting, for we'll be dead if we fall into Russian hands. We therefore demand appropriate guarantees."

The fellow's English was excellent—and his manner quite insolent. I did not hesitate to straighten him out.

"Tell your commander there is only one condition under which he can surrender," I replied. "His troops will enter the village and lay down their arms. There are no other terms." Then, offhandedly, "What command is to surrender?"

"Sir," replied the German, "there are over seven hundred men, mainly elements of an SS force and a mountain division, with some stragglers from other units. Most have lost their families and homes to the Russians. Shall they lose their own lives to the Russians also?"

"They will be prisoners of the American Army and will be treated as such."

"Very well, sir. I am empowered to accept your terms."

But the lateness of the hour presented a problem. I did not want a tenth of that number of Germans near me just then. I could not expect to maintain control of hundreds of prisoners in a dark village. They would soon learn from the inhabitants that our group was small enough to overwhelm. With this in mind, I told the emissaries:

"We have gone on stationary guard procedure (a term for a tactical principle that I invented on the spot) for the night and since the sentries will fire on any moving object, you will remain in this hotel until five o'clock in the morning. Then you will return to your commander and tell him that at eight o'clock he will head the first element into the village along the east road. Your men will come out of the woods at a point to be established by me on the east side of the village. As your men pass this point they will pile up their arms and whatever ammunition they still have. They will then proceed into the village with their hands clapsed behind their heads. They will line up in the square, still in unit formation. I will

stand for no monkey business, and my troops will be instructed accordingly."

"Ya wohl, Her Oberst," they both responded.

Whether my next move was a mistake, I'll never know. Usually, the presence of an *oberst*—a colonel—signifies a sizable force. To reinforce that idea in the minds of the Nazi emissaries, I said to Larry Brown, "Lieutenant, you will see that the number of men at all posts is doubled and that the stationary guard order is fully in effect."

"But we have only seven men, Colonel," replied Brownie.

I could not have been more shocked had the Germans pulled a gun. I tried not to show my dismay at Brownie's blooper. I took his arm and squeezed it so hard he later had a dark bruise. In a penetrating tone, I said, "Lieutenant Brown, I want you to carry the order to the CO of the Second Battalion telling him to detail enough men to double the guard. Understand?"

Brownie looked stunned, but he wanted to free his arm from my grip. "Yes, sir. I understand."

I walked away without glancing at the Nazi officers. Had they caught on? If so, did they have some means of transmitting information to the troops in the mountains? Heisenberg was my target, not Urfeldt. But if I started moving Heisenberg out of Urfeldt would that bring on something I could not handle? As usual, I had to make a decision fast. If I could expect some support to reach me within a short time, I would stay. If not, I would withdraw and return at daybreak.

I picked up the phone in the inn and was not too surprised to hear an operator's voice. I asked for Kochel and, getting it, asked for the American commander. This appeared too much for the operator, who said that she did not know any Americans were in Kochel. She gave me the burgermeister. He told me that yes, there was an American officer at the hotel. Shortly afterward, a voice reported to me in perfect American that he was the only Yank in the area. When I asked him to contact the unit at the inn by the lake, he answered that the unit had pulled back.

Now I knew that somewhere along the line the wires were crossed and I was not talking to Kochel. A voice with a German accent suddenly said, "We shall never surrender. You come up to Herzogstand and get us, or maybe we come down. We know there are not many of you." Someone else

cut in, saying he was a lieutenant colonel at Jachenau and adding, "Ve die for der Fuhrer. Heil Hitler!"

I hung up.

I instructed Jack Edell to prepare a secret withdrawal to Kochel, the hotel to be guarded until the last minute. I shoved some rations into my pockets and climbed up to Heisenberg's cabin.

"We expect fighting around here tonight." I told him. "I should not want you hurt. So I suggest that you and your family hide until morning in the safest place you know."

Late that evening we pulled out of Urfeldt on our retreat to Kochel. We tried not to disclose the movement. We trudged down the mountainside tensely, in total silence, the men alert to any sound in the woods. Nearing the bottom we all heard noisy hammering followed by some good old American swearing. Gerry Beatson remarked with relief, "That's Eddie, all right!"

We then heard Eddie Dolan exclaiming, "Captain, sir, I don't give a damn what you say. The Old Man is on top of that mountain with my outfit. You heard Lieutenant Anderson. They've already had one fight and I'm not leaving them alone up there overnight. If your goddam engineers can't build the bridge, I'll drive a bunch of POW's over here and make those bastards build it—"

"Quiet down, Sergeant. We're working as fast as we can. We'll have vehicles going up there in the morning."

"The morning isn't soon enough. . . ."

Then we heard Larry Brown, leading our column, say, "If it's very early in the morning, Eddie, it will be soon enough. The Old Man is down. He came to bring you up there to help us fight."

Our sudden return took the wind out of Eddie's sails.

Actually the engineers were doing exceptionally well although the job at first had looked impossible. I thanked the captain and went on into Kochel.

Anderson's recon unit was still at the inn. Carl Fiebig went deeper into Kochel, where he made arrangements for the men to bed down for a few hours: my instructions were to be ready to move at four in the morning. Then Lieutenants Anderson and Edell went over my plans with me. There was no need to convince Anderson to rejoin us. I surmised that our men had fed his men with stories of previous Lightning-A

operations, and furthermore, his mission was to probe into enemy territory. On consideration, he decided he could probe just as well from the top of the mountain as from below it.

It was nearly midnight when a captain reported to me. He had been sent by a lieutenant colonel commanding a battalion of the 36th to announce its arrival and ask for instructions. Because it was essential to have the operational plan clearly understood, I told the captain to return and request that both the battalion commanders with their staffs meet with me.

The meeting was not inspiring. When I explained my plan and announced that we were moving out at four in the morning, both commanders pleaded fatigue and the need to get equipment in shape.

Irritated by the attitude of the commanders, I was tempted to pull rank and order them to send a company or two to Urfeldt. But it was my feeling that the job could be done with Anderson's help, particularly if his combat vehicles could be moved up the mountain.

It was close to one o'clock when I reached the hotel, anticipating a couple of hours' sleep before the three o'clock reveille set for the task force. Notwithstanding the hard day, Carl Fiebig was waiting rather stiffly in the hall and voices could be heard at the top of the stairs.

"This way, sir. Your room is ready."

I sensed that a bunch of small devils were ready to help the men do a little relaxing. Carl Fiebig followed me up the stairs with a stiffer gait than customary among our boys. On the landing he shouted, "*Achtung!*"

I saw men lined up and heard a clicking of heels. Not one loud click as when soldiers perform the motion together, but a sound like the chattering of teeth. But the men were at ramrod attention, each wearing an SS trooper's cap.

Carl Fiebig spoke. "Oberst von Posch, your room is there."

Before I could approach the door, Larry Brown stepped up and did some more heel-clicking. "Oberst von Posch, the vehicles are ready to march at four o'clock. *Heil!*

Next came Eddie Dolan, who in spite of all his effort could not stiffen up his bulky self like a good storm trooper, nor could he wipe the smile off his big Irish face. "Oberst von Posch, the goddam—excuse me—engineers will have the bridge ready by three o'clock or I'll exterminate them."

Then I noticed O'Connor's presence. Carl Fiebig stepped

forward, holding a German Iron Cross. "Would the Oberst desire to decorate the hero of the Battle of the Bilge?"

Fine. The men had had their fun, and it was quite possible the extra thirty or forty minutes they had spent at it were better for them than thirty or forty minutes of sleep. Some of the latter, however, remained advisable.

"Okay, men, let's get to bed." Walking to the door of the room, I saw what the farce was all about. We had taken over the billets of an SS outfit which had moved out in a hurry, leaving behind many belongings. My room had been occupied by the commander, whose name-plate—*Oberst lieutenant von Posch*—was still on the door.

"Where's your buddy, Carl?" I asked. With Gerry Beatson not in on the fun, something had to be up.

"My buddy is a very sick man," was the reply. "We never saw him so sick, even when he drank rotgut. Finding the Rosses in a mess of blood, and then that SS raid on Urfeldt —too much for his delicate stomach, sir!"

"Raid on Urfeldt! When?"

Carl explained that one of the home guardsmen who had surrendered to us in the village had made his way down the mountain, arriving only a half-hour before. He had reported that between eleven o'clock and midnight at least 100 SS men had raided the village and, finding no Americans, had taken out their spite on the home guards who had collaborated with us. Some had been killed and their bodies thrown into the lake. When Gerry had learned of this and had thought of what might have happened if we had remained in Urfeldt, he had become sick to his stomach.

"Carl," I said, "he'll recover by morning. Don't let me forget to tell the men what to expect when we start up that mountain."

At five minutes past four on the morning of 3 May my jeep moved across the bridge. The engineer detail, looking tired but proud, was there to wave us on as the column rolled. Another jeep mounting a machine-gun followed me, and was followed in turn by a light tank, a half-track mounting a 37-mm gun, and the rest of our armored vehicles and jeeps. Alsos was on its way to retake Urfeldt.

Going by road, we had to cross two more bridges to reach

Urfeldt. Reaching the first—a high span across a deep gorge—I halted the column. I sent five men across, scattering the snow and looking for booby traps. Certainly it was a haphazard way to check. But we had no mine-detecting equipment nor did we have time to delay for a full inspection. Nothing being found, I waved the column on and we rolled on with more confidence to the second or so-called Kesselberg Bridge at the outskirts of Urfeldt.

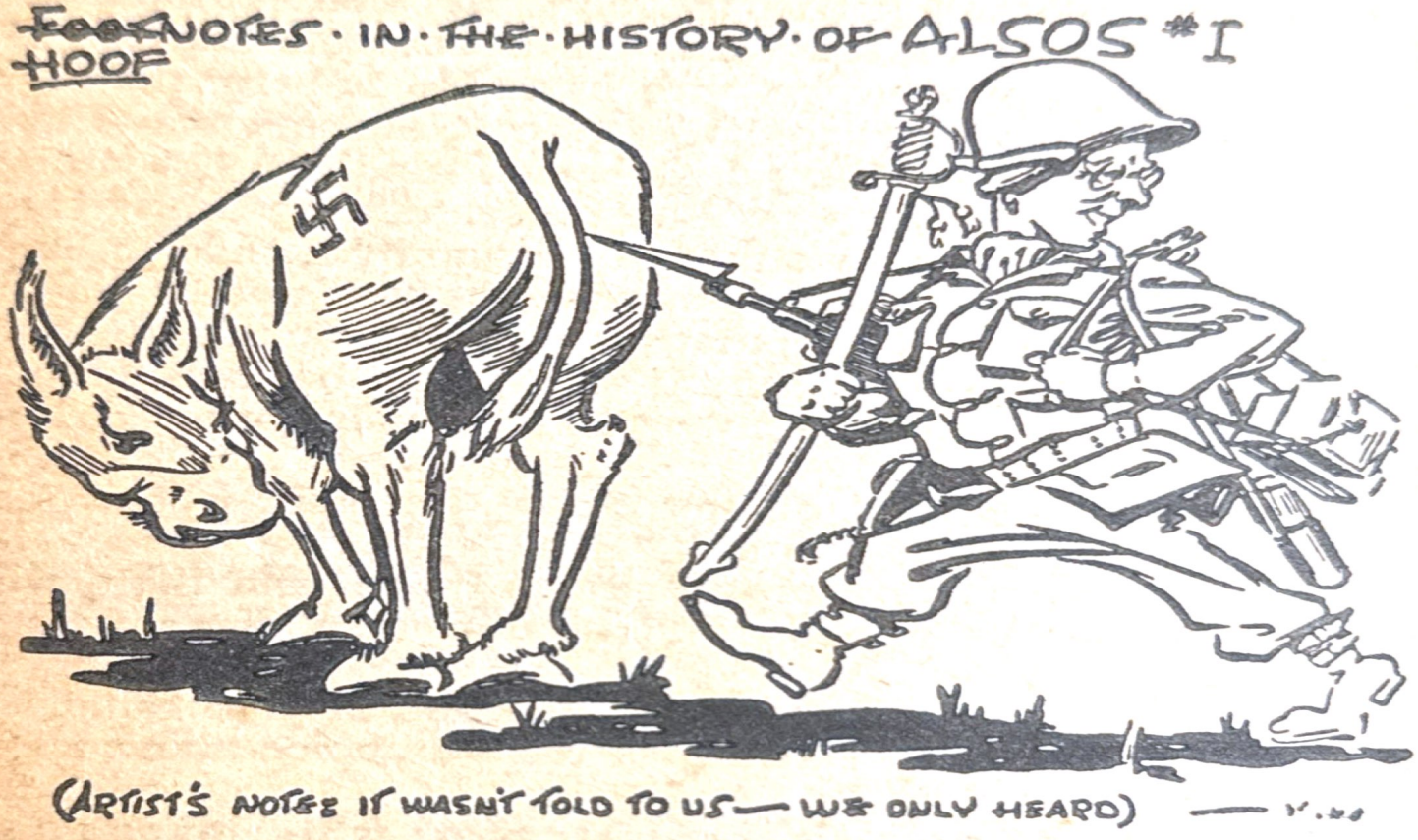
This time I skimped in deploying a skirmish line to enter the village. The sight of our armor and of combat men emerging from various points in the woods stopped any ambitious enemy, if such were around. A patrol of two armored vehicles and a jeep moved along the lake shore to the east, a similar patrol to the south. My CP was set up in the inn, and Carl Fiebig was dispatched with a patrol to Heisenberg's cabin to secure him and his documents.

A few minutes after our armored patrols appeared about the lake, armed German units and individual soldiers began coming in to surrender. We had established checkpoints on the margins of the village where all arms were deposited. One of the first small units to surrender was an element of a mountain division. The men brought with them their mules still carrying combat packs.

Those mules became a problem. They were herded into a space close to a row of garages and low storage buildings. I made an inspection and had to emerge either through the area or around it. At one point the passage was obstructed by a mule with a gun barrel strapped on its back. A chain dangling from its bit had been draped over a cross bar. Assuming that the mule was chained fast, I figured that the safest way for me to pass was to grasp the chain firmly and wheel the mule around. Walking up to the creature, I extended my hand and was shocked to find myself looking at the mule's rear end and a pair of cocked heels.

My reaction was swift. I wheeled and darted away. But the mule was swifter. The two hoofs came at me like pistons and caught me in the back. My feet must have left the ground. At any rate, I landed ten feet farther away than I could jump under my own power.

Some of the men carried me into the inn and stretched me on one of the wooden benches next to the telephone, which was manned by Gerry Beatson. Just beginning to recover my



breath, I gasped that he should find out whether Carl Fiebig had completed his mission. The conversation at my end went something like this:

"That you, Carl? Say, the Old Man's worried about you, and I'm worried about him . . . Sure, he's issuing orders right and left, but he's flat on his back . . . What happened? I'll tell you. He's our first casualty . . . No, he won't die. Why, he got an award . . . No, not that one—but it's purple, all right. He got the purple shoes . . . Yes, I said purple shoes. An enemy mule kicked him in the, uh, the back."

Gerry hung up and turned to me with his innocent smile.

"Colonel, my buddy said he's sorry you got hurt. He's coming down to report. He has this guy, but he's upset about your combat scars and wants to get a look at you."

It was impossible to be angry with such youngsters, even

though my efforts to laugh at my trigger-man's clowning caused severe pain.

When Carl arrived, he first reassured himself that I was not mortally wounded except in the ego. He then reported that Heisenberg was in custody and his documents packed. He was more than willing to go with us to Heidelberg, the more so because he had been told that Sam Goudsmit was there. Among Heisenberg's papers had been found a 1920-vintage photograph of him and Sam. But Heisenberg had misgivings about his future and the welfare of the family he had to leave behind. Consequently he did not wish the villagers to get the impression that he was cooperating with us voluntarily.

"Chief," Carl said, "he asks if you would be kind enough to bring him in sort of forcibly—then publicly order him to leave in American custody."

I tried to raise myself on my elbow, but pain jabbed me. This did not help my disposition.

"Go fetch him down here, ready to move, and there will be no doubt in the minds of his countrymen about what's happening."

"Doctor, I understand there is a question in your mind," I said loudly. "You believe you may have a choice about leaving Urfeldt, is that right?"

"Well, Herr Oberst, I thought that with my family here. . . ."

I gave him no chance to finish. "I have ordered you to be ready to leave this afternoon. When I issue an order, I expect it to be followed. That is all!"

The Germans who heard my stern directive could not help but feel sorry for the man.

Eight years later, while I was stationed in Austria, my wife and I passed through Urfeldt on our way to Garmisch. The Heisenbergs were there and I introduced them to my wife. Dr. Heisenberg said to her, "This is where your husband had his last battle with the Nazis, and this is where he arrested me. I did not mind it. He did it very nicely."

Lieutenant Anderson's unit was busy that morning. As soon as it had become evident that the Americans were in force and intended to stay, a continuous stream of German soldiers, singly and in groups, had started coming down the mountains to surrender.

Shortly after nine A.M. when already we had taken nearly

700 prisoners, we saw the leading elements of our combat support entering Urfeldt. I thanked Lieutenant Anderson for his fine work and told him he was free now to go deeper into the Alps to continue his mission. He took his unit south toward Innsbruck.

We were ready to start our return trip and leave Urfeldt to the infantry. By this time my back was getting the best of me. The aid man who came up with the infantry proved of little help. Once more Eddie Dolan and Gerry Beatson, who always behaved like mother hens when they thought anything was wrong with me, built up the seat of my jeep with cushions and padding. That jeep was a bone-crusher. Dr. Heisenberg was also given some padding.

Colonel Quinn sent word ahead so that when we reached Alsos Forward, Sam Goudsmit and George Eckman, with the rest of our brass, were waiting. George told me that General Devers had asked for a report as soon as I returned. The burden of that report was passed on to Washington and London, through General Eisenhower's headquarters. Heisenberg was in Alsos custody—and furthermore the group led by Dick Ham had been as successful as the one led by me. Dick and his men had captured the enemy scientists, Gerlach and Diebner.

The latter had been picked up in Munich, where Dick Ham had had some close calls with the diehards trying desperately to do damage to the men who had been first to enter the famed Bavarian capital. Dick's outfit, which included our Dr. Bauman, had been part of that spearhead.

Following the conclusion of our Alpine operation, news of Lieutenant Anderson reached us. The day after we had left Kochel, he had received a change of orders sending his platoon back to Walchensee, thence east to Jachenau and along the Jachen River. The platoon had been stopped by a few Germans with white flags and then attacked by a large band of diehard Nazis in a type of action I had come to fear during those last weeks of the war.

The ambush had occurred only three days before the Nazis finally quit. Sergeant Jasin, who had climbed the mountain with us a few days earlier, and 12 other men out of the 21 had been hit hard. Most of the platoon had been able to withdraw, but some nuns of a local convent had been obliged

to hide three of the most severely wounded men to prevent them from being finished off by the SS fanatics.

Anderson had been badly hurt. Unconscious for several days, he missed the first flash of the German surrender—which was vigorously celebrated by all units.

CHAPTER XXIV

Alsos to the Rescue

The fighting had ended four days after our return from the snowy Alps to the pleasant surroundings in Heidelberg. Capitulation had thrown wide the gates to our scientists, whose interest remained intense in research centers, document centers, laboratories and other places where war research could have been carried out. Alsos teams became active in all parts of Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Italy, and, as guests, in Holland, Belgium and France. I remained at Heidelberg, where interrogation of a number of German scientists had not yet concluded.

Life was soft. Spring turned the weather balmy. We enjoyed the beauty of the ancient castle and the old city. But our serenity was soon to be disturbed.

About the middle of May, George Eckman came down from Paris. It seemed he was having difficulties with SHAEF.

He showed me a scribbled note from Bryan Conrad. *Colonel Eckman: Well, here it is. The fat is in the fire. BC.*

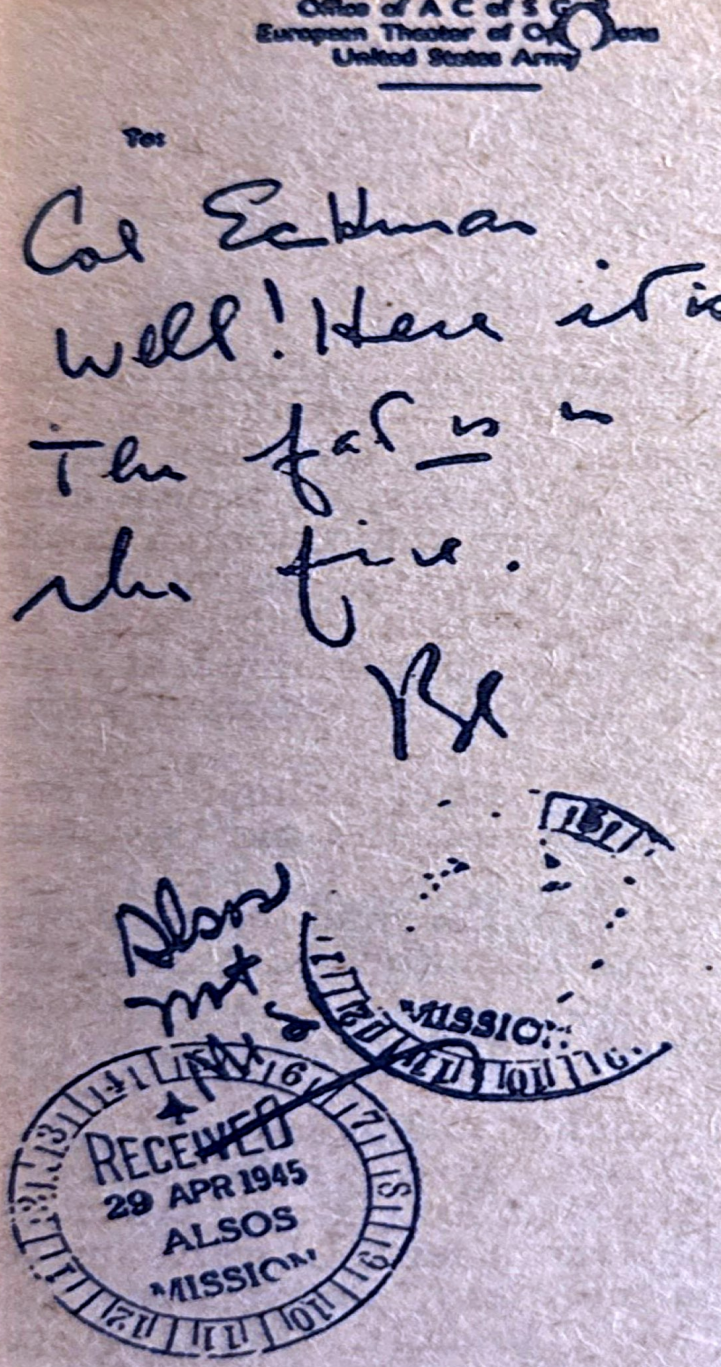
"That's what I've been telling you, Boris. I've been putting out Alsos fires all the way from London to Heidelberg."

"I know, George, and I appreciate it. What is it this time?"

"We were informed on 17 April that Dr. Groth had been put under arrest by the British. Our scientists went up to Hamburg, bypassing all headquarters, and interrogated him. They then disclaimed further Alsos interest. On 23 April we got a letter from Col. Francis P. Miller, Deputy Chief of the Special Section of SHAEF, demanding an explanation. We did not reply. So on 8 May we received a letter from Brig. Gen. Tom Betts, SHAEF Deputy G-2, directing that we make a reply. I did that."

I nodded.

"No sooner had I done so," George continued, "than we



Office of A C of S G-2
European Theater of Operations
United States Army

To:

Col Eckman
Well! Here it is -
The fat is in
the fire.
BC

Also not
MS

MISSION

RECEIVED
29 APR 1945
ALSOS
MISSION

Pash.

Nice going - think
what you'd get if
you capture Hitler.
M

File
BC

The above note was sent
to Col. Pash by General Weckerling
in forwarding a War Dept Commen-
dation to Alsos for the Paris operation

received another letter from General Betts, telling us we dare not show our noses in the 21st Army Group area and to withdraw any personnel we might have there. Then our technical people went to Hamburg and brought Dr. Harteck to Paris—again without clearing through any headquarters.

These longhairs just don't believe that rules are written for them."

I shrugged.

"None of the commanders gave us any trouble when the war was on," George said, "except maybe some of the Twelfth Army Group. But the urgency is over. A day or two of delay would make no difference in the results. It's just that our scientists hate to comply with military regulations. Maybe they think that compliance makes them servants of bureaucracy."

"I know, George. The funny thing is that after living with them for a year, I've come to realize that within their own circles they also have regulations, restraints and caste levels. These they readily accept."

"Well, Boris, we're lucky to have a friend at court. Bryan Conrad gave me hell, but he smiled doing it. He and I talked to Betts and cleared it all up. We received a letter from Betts dated 18 May, lifting the suspension. Now, are you going to be around to put out your own fires?"

"George, SHAEF is moving to Frankfurt. I'll keep in touch there. You continue your contact with Bryan and run our operations in the north. It's easier to do that from Paris, but I'd like you to spend most of your time here."

Thereafter George Eckman handled all the administrative details of the command, including keeping our northern base in Goetingen busy. My time was devoted more to contact with SHAEF and particularly to the Scientific Section where Dr. Robert Robinson and Dr. Frederick Seitz were active.

On the evening of 30 June, while in Frankfurt, I received orders to report to General Smith.

I found Fred Seitz was in the general's office. He was holding a radiogram from Sam Goudsmit, in Paris. It reported that the International Radium Standard developed by Madame Curie was located in Weida, a small town in eastern Thuringia about forty miles south of Leipzig. During the occupation of France, the Nazi authorities had moved the standard from Paris to Berlin. With the dispersal of their installations, they had transferred their National Bureau of Standards to Weida. The radium standard had gone with the Bureau.

The standard was considered of the utmost international importance. It was the one official standard for measuring radioactivity and a basis for developing other standards.

General Smith went immediately to the purpose of his summons.

"Pash, this little town is occupied by one of our small tank-destroyer units. But the commander already has orders to pull out at three o'clock tomorrow morning. We are drawing back all our forward elements and turning over the area to the Russians. Do you follow?"

"Yes, sir."

"Now, we simply cannot have that standard fall into Russian hands. They would never give it back to the French. I don't think the world would ever see it again."

"I agree, sir."

"We can't get word to that outfit in time. Nor do we have anyone in the chain of command who could handle the job. Our only hope is for you to rush Alsos up there. Your mission will be to get out with that standard before the Russians come in, understand?"

We went over the maps with a staff officer. If we undertook this project, we would have about eight hours in which to cover some 300 miles along an autobahn that ran to within fifteen or twenty miles of the town. But in many places bridges and overpasses had been destroyed.

I sighed.

"General, if you will prepare the necessary orders I'll call Heidelberg, using your name to clear wires if necessary." He nodded permission. "I'll have my outfit on the road in twenty minutes."

"Knew I could depend on Alsos," said General Smith, "Just don't start a war with the Russians."

"If you'll excuse me, sir, I have a lot to do."

"Use my Exec's office."

Leaving, I sent for Eddie Dolan, who had driven me to Frankfurt. In a few seconds I was talking to George Eckman on the telephone. "George, have a unit on the move in twenty minutes. Armed. Include my outfit at Forward. I want 21 men in 7 jeeps with fuel for 500 miles and rations for 2 days. Mount machine guns on every jeep you can. Include one scientist. Who's available?" I could hear George repeating my instructions. This meant that even as I spoke they were being passed to men standing by and carried out.

"Carl Baumann is available," was the reply. "But just a minute."

Realizing that an emergency operation was under way,

George was interrupting the conversation to order Ellsworth Brake, one of our office force, to call Forward and tell that bunch to arm themselves and start for Rear.

He came back on, "Yes?"

"Baumann is just the man. Send him along. Tell whoever you put in command that I'll be waiting on the autobahn at Bad Nauheim—oh—say in an hour and three-quarters. They'll recognize my jeep by a colored right headlight."

"That's pretty fast driving for a convoy on those roads, George."

"I'm arranging for an MP jeep to lead them, and that should do it. Are you worrying about an Alsos outfit moving too fast? What caused this change?"

"All right, George. Send someone here to see Fred Seitz, and he'll give you the complete picture." I hung up.

When I turned around, Eddie Dolan was there, a broad grin on his face. "Sir, what color paper do you want on the headlight? Not red, I hope. We might be mistaken for MP's and I'd never live that down."

"Make it green, Eddie."

Dismissing the MP jeep, we struck out for Weida.

The men made the rendezvous right on time.

Near Erfurt, our well-spaced column was maintaining a forty-mile pace. I was driving the lead jeep with Dr. Baumann as a passenger and Eddie Dolan in the back, for we were switching drivers every hour. We were driving with lights on. Only the right-hand section of the autobahn was in use. We approached a slight rise as a convoy of trucks ascended the rise from the other side. Suddenly a large truck without lights appeared in our lane, racing toward us to pass the convoy. He was about twenty feet ahead of the convoy when we made contact.

The truck driver had cut sharply to his right, but to this day I believe my jeep curved around the truck. It hit us on the left side so hard that the top frame was knocked off and the side-view mirror smashed. The metal nests on the side of the jeep, where an ax and shovel are usually carried, were flattened against the jeep body. I jammed on the brakes and my taillights signaled our convoy to a screeching halt. Lieutenant Brown, Carl Fiebig and Gerry Beatson, riding in the second jeep, raced up, I suppose, expecting to find limp bodies. I recall jumping out and yelling, "Catch that SOB and get all the dope on him!"

"Let the bastard go," someone said. "He's too far gone. We'll lose an hour catching him."

I looked for Dr. Baumann and Eddie Dolan. Neither was hurt, and since my only damages were a knock on the head from the top frame, a cut hand and a banged-up foot, we remounted and continued at the same pace.

We pulled into Weida about three in the morning. The unit stationed there was just about to move out. I did not object. Because of the curfew in effect, in the morning the inhabitants probably would not realize that any change had taken place. The captain commanding the unit pointed out the building in which the Bureau of Standards was located.

I elected to strike at seven A.M., banking on the Soviets entering town during daylight for effect. Right after our conference, I sent six men in two jeeps to drive out several miles east of the town. They dragged two old German trucks and passenger car. With these they were to block the road with a simulated wreck to impede entry into town in the event of an early arrival of a Soviet patrol.

The rest of us bedded down for a couple of hours. At 6:45, after visiting one address without success, I found an official connected with the Bureau. He let in Dr. Baumann and I reluctantly when I insisted we had to search the building. Baumann poked around, indicating to me the most likely areas in the building. With the search narrowed, the manager disclosed the room where radium was stored. Firm prodding induced him to open a wall safe. While Baumann went to inspect other parts of the building, I emptied the safe of its contents. They consisted of several small cartons which I removed, much to the German's displeasure.

"I'll show you the French standard," he said. "The rest of these are our own."

"Are they also radium standards?"

"Yes."

"Then I'm taking all of them."

"But the Colonel will let me list them and give a receipt for them?"

"All right. Hurry it up."

I failed to notice that he was taking the small glass vials out of the cartons and from behind a metal shield was looking at their reflections in a mirror. I was double-checking his entries from the side, looking directly at the vials. In my

haste to liberate the standards and get out of town, I also failed to notice that the safe was lined with lead.

The manager recorded the French standard, and thirteen German standards of varying degrees of strength, which he claimed Germans had developed from the International Standard. The combined value of the standards was close to 300 millicuries.

I had kept up with him as he had recorded each standard. Quickly I signed the name *Col. Robert Smith*. Then I seized the carton and ran.

By this time it was seven o'clock and our outfit was in position. One jeep shot off to notify our holding force to pull back. The rest of us left Weida at a reasonable pace so that the others could overtake us. Outside the town we raced at top speed toward our first stop on the autobahn.

On the afternoon of 1 July, I walked into Fred Seitz's office where Dr. Robertson and Col. Ralph M. Osborne, Chief of the SHAEF Scientific Section, were also waiting.

"Success, gentlemen," I announced. "I've brought you not one standard, but fourteen!"

They gathered around my package. With a flourish I pulled out fourteen glass vials, one by one, and laid them on the table. The scientists stared, then dashed madly from the room. They yelled that I should do likewise.

In the corridor, I asked, "What's wrong?"

"That radium isn't shielded," Fred Seitz explained. "It should never be close to you!"

"Well, it's too late now. I've been carrying it around for eight hours, hugging it in the jeep."

They looked at me in consternation. After that, there was considerable scurrying around in search of a suitable container. Colonel Osborne finally came up with what looked like a small lead coffin, borrowed from Professor Rajewsky at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute. The standards were placed in the coffin, and the coffin was placed in a vault.

The exposure, many times the normal tolerance, was not strong enough to kill an Alsos man. Some spots showed up on the left side of my body and were considered radium burns. Otherwise I could detect no damage nor could doctors who examined me.

That was Alsos' last operation. There remained the task of exploiting the Alsos wartime successes—work which fell to the scientists.

THE MEN OF ALSOS

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Dr. Samuel A. GOUDSMIT, OSRD—Chief, Scientific Group Editor-in-Chief, American Physical Society. Chairman, Physics Dept., Brookhaven Nat'l Inst., Long Island, N.Y.

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ROSENBERGER, William R., 1st Lieut., Army

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STERRETT, Dr. J. D., OSRD

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STRAUSS, Walter A., Pfc, Army, Professor of Romance Languages, Emory University

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TOPEL, Marinus G., 1st Lieut., Army, State Librarian, Wisconsin. Deceased

TOLLES, Dr. Walter F., OSRD, Head, Dept. of Medical and Biological Physics, Airborne Instruments Laboratory, Division of Cutler-Hammer Inc.

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WACLO, Steve, 1st. Lieut., Army

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WARNER, William L., 2nd Lieut., Army, Insurance Broker, Portland, Ore.

WEIMER, David E., 1st Lieut., Army, Director of Purchases, Carlisle Tire and Rubber Division of Carlisle Corp.

WHALEY, Harold, Tec 5, Army, Rev. Whaley, Methodist Minister. Librarian and Professor, Unity School of Christianity, Lee's Summit, Mo.

WHITE, James R., Tec 4, Army, Deceased

WOOLEY, John C., Sp. Agt, CIC, Army

YOUNG, William D., Tec 4, Army

ALLIED PERSONNEL

ADAMS, H.W.B., Major, British

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CECIL, Rupert G., Wing Commander, British

GATTIKER, David C., Major, British, President, St. Paul (US) Ammonia Products, Inc.—Retired

HAMBRO, Sir Charles, Colonel, British, Statesman, Industrialist, Banker—Deceased

HIGMAN, Bryan, Flight Lieutenant, British

IBALL, John, Major, British

LEA, C.P., Lieut., British

MICHELS, A., Colonel, Netherlands, Professor of Physics, University of Amsterdam, Holland

PERRIN, Sir Michael, Lieut. Colonel, British, Director, Welcome Foundation. Chairman of the Board of St. Bartholomew Hospital. London, England

RANDERS, Gunnar, Captain, Norway, Chairman, Norwegian Atomic Energy Council; President, European Atomic Energy Society

ROTHWELL, Percy, Lieut. Colonel, British

SERLUI, J., Sgt., Netherland

VOETELNIK, C., Lieut., Netherland, Manager, Planning Division, International Department, Phillips Petroleum Corp. Oklahoma

WALLWORK, H. C., Major, British

WELCH, Eric, Lieut. Com-

mander, British, British Intelligence—Deceased
WILSON, Cecil, Lieut., British

ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL

BOHAN, Mary (Paris), Staff Member, U.N. Scientific Committee on Effects of Atomic Radiation
CONNERTON, Edyth M/Sgt., WAC (London) Le Secretary
CUNNINGHAM, Anvilla (Paris)
MILNE, Catherine H., (P
ZIMMERLY, Harriet. Pentagon), Secretar to Secretary of The Ai orc

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